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The Current Crop of Creepers



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MONSTER FANTASY MOVIES

The current crop of creepers

"THE FOUR MUSKETEERS"—Director Richard Lester's sequel to "The Three Musketeers", featuring Oliver Reed, Richard Chamberlain, Frank Finley, and Michael York as the swashbuckling quartet, and Faye Dunaway, Raquel Welch, Cherlton Heston, Christopher Lee, Geraldine Chaplin, Jean Pierre Cassel, and Simon Ward recreating their original roles. Lester's direction focuses on the large-scale action sequences, and they're marvelous. The actors did all their own fencing with real foils, and Michael York almost lost an eye shooting this one. For real!

"THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT"—Doug McClure, Susan Penhaligon, and John McNery head off the cast of this flick, about their sojourn to a lost continent complete with dinosaurs, cave-men, and erupting volcanoes. British survivors of a German U-Boat attack during World War I lead a submarine through the South Atlantic into a world of the prehistoric past. Special effects in this one are fun, but not first-rate.

"THE LAST SURVIVORS"—This made-for-TV movie focuses on who should live, and who should die when too many survivors crown into a lifeboat. Martin Sheen, as the ship's purser thrown into command of the lifeboat, and Diane Baker as a struggling survivor, give excellent performances, along with Tom Bosley, Christopher George, Bruce Davison, and Anne Francis. Their entry into the water, a typhoon, the conflict in the lifeboat and a trial scene after their rescue make for a somewhat cramped 90-minute feature, complete with commercial interruption.

"THE LEGEND OF LIZZIE BORDEN"—Bewitched's Elizabeth

Montgomery plays the lady who took an ex-husband and gave her mother forty whacks in this made-for-TV chiller. Much of the action takes place in the courtroom where Ed Flanders and Don Porter play the prosecuting and defense attorneys. Through recurring flashback sequences we gain increasingly perplexing insights into this twisted lady's distorted mind. Fritz Weaver and Helen Craig play the unlucky parents.

"ABBY"—This is what happens when "The Exorcist" meets the black exploitation film. William Girdler directed this one for American International. Story line follows closely that of the William Friedkin box-office bonanza, except now the possessed victim is the young black wife of a Louisville minister. After all attempts to cure her through conventional medical means fail, the axorcist is called in to save her soul and combat the devil. Thrills are provided by the yellow-eyed, deep-voiced Abby vomiting white foam, and throwing men against walls. Special effects include slamming doors and flying furniture.

"ANDY WARHOL'S ORACULA"—Paul Morrissey directs this X-rated version of the familiar Bram Stoker legend which looks equally for laughs and screams in a blood-soft-core sex atmosphere. Udo Kier has the title role as the wandering vampire, whose search for virgin blood leads him to the country villa of an aristocratic family with four young eligible daughters, whom they try to foist off on the wealthy Count. The gardener-hero of the family, played by Joe Dallesandro, notices the mark of the vampire on the girls, whom he has been sleeping with, and attempts to destroy Dracula. Gorey to an extreme, highlights of this film include two very lengthy blood-vomiting scenes, and

mutilation and dismembering scenes, much like those of Andy Warhol's "Frankenstein."

"EARTHQUAKE"—Charlton Heston, Ava Gardner, George Kennedy and Lorne Greene headline this cast-of-thousands epic about the destruction of Los Angeles by earthquakes. And it's a biggie! The special effects are a real treat—and they include crumbling skyscrapers, collapsing freeways, falling houses and bursting dams. On top of this visual carnage is the special "Sensurround" feature which realistically sends vibrations through the specially-equipped theaters. Heston plays an architect who designs quake-proof buildings, Ava Gardner is his rich wife, and Lorne Greene his father-in-law and employer. Featured in subplots are Genevieve Bujold, Richard Roundtree, Victoria Principal, Marjoe Gortner, Barry Sullivan and Lloyd Nolan. Producer-director is Mark Robson, screenplay is by George Fox and Mario Puzo, author of "The Godfather."

"THE FAMILY"—This Japanese-made film is similar to "The Godfather" in its commentary on high finance and corruption. "The Family" exposes the immoral aspects of big business and reveals high government officials to be steeped in crime. At the same time it shows the breakdown of the Japanese family unit which suffers from outdated traditional values. The plot follows a ruthless financial leader who bankrupts his son's steel company in order to merge his bank with the 8th largest national bank in Japan. The father has a westernized mistress played by legendary Japanese film star Machiko Kyo. In Japanese with English subtitles.

"FRANKENSTEIN, 1894"—Producer Frank R. Sauter is also planning to direct this one. It's still on the drawing board.

"THE HEPHAESTUS PLAGUE"

—Bradford Dillman, Joanna Miles and Patty McCormack head the cast of this Paramount release under direction of William Castle.

"THE HINDENBURG" A Universal release based on the book which claimed the explosion aboard the Nazi dirigible was no accident. The special effects should be terrific. George C. Scott, Anne Bancroft and Roy Thinnes are under Robert Wise's direction.

"HOLY WEDNESDAY"—For years *Sneaky* has spent his Wednesday evenings with his buddy listening to Sousa marches. When *Sneaky's* buddy gives up Sousa for a disco dancer, *Sneaky* goes berserk and starts to feed people to his snake collection. That is the premise for *World Wide Films' "Holy Wednesday,"* and it's a creeper! Snakes abound in this one.

"THE HOUSE ON SKULL MOUNTAIN"—20th Century Fox brings us this voodoo horror flick, about four relatives called to a mysterious house by a dying old woman. While there, they fall under the threat of voodoo death. All the standard horror features are present—skulls, snakes,

Black masses, voodoo dolls, and things that go bump in the night. Victor French and Janes Michelle star.

"THE HOUSE THAT VANISHED"

—Hallmark Productions picked up this British-made spooker on the familiar theme of the beautiful girl menaced by evil forces. Action takes place in fog-shrouded London in a soft-core sex atmosphere of horror. Lovely Andrea Allan stars as the terrorized victim.

"THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE"—Jacqueline Bisset, Christopher Plummer and Mildred Dunnock in a remake of the old chiller about the mute girl menaced by the killer. It's on it's way from Warner Brothers.

"THE STEPFORD WIVES"—Katherine Ross, Paula Prentiss and Tina Louise head the cast of this Palomar Picture. A suburban housewife becomes convinced the men of her town, her husband included, are turning their wives into beautiful and obedient robots.

"THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE"—Five young travelers pick up a killer, who attacks one with a razor, and later sets about polishing them off with a chain saw. A cast of unknowns make it seem even more real—and scary!

"TORSO"—A Carlo Ponti Production about a murderer who likes to

make "choice cuts" out of his victims, who are invariably beautiful and female. After murdering two girls at an Italian University, the murderer left his scarf on the body of one. A friend of the murdered girls remembers seeing the scarf worn by a man, but the murderer learns of her identity and follows her to the country. After killing her and two of her friends, he comes back for more when he learns there was a fourth girl at the house. A real gut-clutcher.

"TRILOGY OF TERROR"—Karen Black stars in three tales of terror produced and directed by Dan Curtis of "The Nightstalker" fame. Part One sees Black as a prudish schoolteacher blackmailed into having an affair with one of her students, Robert Burton. Nice twist at the end, it is by far the best segment, when compared to the other two which are needlessly freaky, and violent. If you missed this made-for-TV pic in March, you can catch it in the reruns.

"THE YAKUZA"—Robert Mitchum plays a detective called to Japan by a friend in trouble who quickly gets caught up in troubles of his own with the Yakuza—or Japanese mob. Master swordsman Takakura Kan plays Mitchum's buddy, and really lets loose in some hairy fights. The film, however, does not become a martial arts pic, though perhaps Warners would have liked it that way. Much emphasis is placed on the



"The Stepford Wives" are monsters all right—they just happen to be gorgeous monsters.

Yakuza code of honor, which states, among other things, that a man who is disgraced in action may be forgiven by cutting off a finger and giving it to those he wronged. One fellow gets awfully generous in a scene with a cut-off hand flying through the air while still clutching a pistol.

"THE TOWERING INFERNO"—The biggest catastrophe picture yet! It's got Steve McQueen, Paul Newman, William Holden, Robert Chamberlain, Robert Wagner, Fred Astaire, Jennifer Jones, Faye Dunaway, O.J. Simpson and Robert Vaughn. A part of V.I.P.'s are trapped by fire at the top of a new skyscraper.

"LE TRIO INFERNAL"—Francis Girod directs this macabre French-made comedy. Michel Piccoli stars as the lover of two German girls who need French husbands in order to remain in France. Among Piccoli's less revolting acts is to marry them off to aging wealthy businessmen, and then, once the gents are dead, share the insurance money. Among his more revolting acts is the shotgun murder of a couple whose bodies he then dissolves in sulphuric acid, and the faked death of the younger sister in order to collect her insurance, which he accomplishes by buying another girl under his sister's name. A real family picture—if your family is the Borgies!

"YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN"—Mel Brooks, who finished off the Far West in "Blazing Saddles," now has his sights set on horror films in this parody from 20th Century-Fox. Gene Wilder is the young doctor, Peter Boyle is the monster and it's a hoot!

"IT'S ALIVE!"—The horror potential of the mutation of animals and insects has been amply explored. Now Larry Cohen shows us the even more horrible possibilities of human mutation in "It's Alive." Due to his exposure to a powerful insecticide an exterminator gives birth to a killer baby who begins to terrorize the city, after leaving the delivery room a mess of blood. John Ryan, Sharon Farrell, Andrew Duggan, and Guy Stockwell star.

"JAWS"—A killer shark terrorizes a resort community. Based on the best-selling novel by Peter Benchley. Roy Schneider and Robert Shew star.

"LEGEND OF THE WERE WOLF"—Tyburn Productions' latest. Starring Ron Moody, Hugh Griffith, Roy Cestle, and horror-great Peter Cushing!

"LUCKY LUCIANO"—We have this one listed for all you horror freaks who are also gangster goofs. Charles "Lucky" Luciano was one of the all-time underworld leaders, and the film follows his exploits from the 1931 Coney Island mob execution to his resumed control of narcotics traffic from Italy after his American exile. Gian-Marie Volonte is excellent as the former crime boss, as are Edmund O'Brien as the Bureau of Narcotics Commissioner, and Rod Steiger as Gene Giannini, a mobster informer.

"PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE"—Paul Williams stars as Swan, a nightclub owner out looking for a new act. Like it says in the ads, he sells his soul for rock 'n' roll. From 20th Century Fox, it's a parody of the Faust Legend, with hints of the old "Phantom of the Opera."

"SEIZURE"—Jonathan Frid, of "Dark Shadows" fame stars in this one, as a horror writer whose nightmares come true. Three ancient figures of evil appear at the writer's weekend house gathering, killing off everyone. The murderous figures include a Hindu Mother goddess, a sadistic French midget, and a mute black, giant Medieval executioner. It's a Canadian-made film released by A.I.P.

"SON OF DRACULA"—Ex-Beatle Ringo Starr produced and starred in this commentary about horror films. Harry Nilsson plays the rock-singer son of Dracula torn between his world of music and his heritage as the vampire king. Ringo plays *Merlin the Magician* trying to find a missing feature in Dracula's astronomical chart. Plusses for this one include some fine songs by Paul Buckmaster and Nilsson, and appearances by the Wolfman and Dr. Frankenstein.

Donald Pleasance gets ready to operate in "The Mutations."



The sideshow people from "Eye of the Beholder"



"NIGHT MOVIES"—Gene Hackman plays a private eye with marital troubles, hired by an ex-movie starlet (Janet Ward) to find her runaway teenage daughter. He tracks her down to the Florida Keys, where he meets a fascinating woman, played by Jennifer Warren. The day after being delivered to her mother in L.A., the daughter is accidentally killed in a movie stunt. While watching movie footage of the accident, Hackman realizes she has been murdered. Director Arthur Penn ("Bonnie and Clyde," "Miracle Worker") does a masterful job, especially in the scenes between Hackman and Warren.

"SHEBA BABY"—"Coffy's" Pam Grier returns to the silver screen as a private detective who returns to her home town of Louisville to protect her father's loan company from threatening thugs. Dressed to kill, this lady packs a mean wallop as she

makes mincemeat of the criminal underworld. Of course the white bad guy gets harpooned in the end. (Literally).

"THE STRANGE EXORCISM OF LYNN HART"—Producer-director Marc Lawrence also stars in this morbid chiller as *Zambrini*, an ex-circus performer. Thought to have been killed in a fall, *Zambrini* recovers in the mortuary, and sets out on a new life of death. He takes over a roadside cafe and a pig farm, to the latter of which he serves dead bodies. When a mysterious girl comes looking for a job as a waitress, we discover she is a runaway from an insane asylum, who has the annoying habit of castrating her lovers. This one has to be seen to be believed.

"THE STREET FIGHTER"—New Line Cinema's claiming they've found

a successor to kung-fu star Bruce Lee in Sonny Chiba, who leaves his many enemies floored like so many ten-pins. "The Street Fighter" is the action film to end all action films, with scenes of Chiba tearing out the throat of one of his enemies, and castrating another with his bare hands. Not as skilled or attractive as the legendary Lee, he wages a one-man war against the Japanese mafia for a Middle Eastern oil empire, and the helress who owns it. Violence get this one an X-rating.

"TNT JACKSON"—Another martial arts pic from New World Pictures, this has the standard diet of sex and violence considered necessary for success in today's rash of B-rate exploitation pics. Jeanne Bell stars as the mean-looking, mean-taling, bad-guy stomping kung-fu heroine. The fights, though fun, are not very convincing.

The Monster Fantasy Bookshelf



Boris Karloff, shown here as our beloved *Frankenstein's monster*, is also the subject of a new book—"The Films of Boris Karloff," by Richard Bojarski and Kenneth Beels. Then there's Richard J. Anobile's frame-by-frame picture book on *"The Frankenstein"*. A must for *Frankie* fans!

Ten years ago the fantastic cinema received slight recognition as an art form. Serious studies and intelligent, stimulating retrospectives of the genre were few and far between. With the advent of Carlos Clarens' "An Illustrated History of the Horror Film" in early 1966, interest in the filmic fantasy field took an unexpected and prolific turn. His well-researched and comprehensive volume had done more toward legitimizing the downtrodden genre of the fantastic than any reference work or periodical preceding it, and the author himself became identified as the initial groundbreaker in cinefantastique studies.

As the first major book to probe the genre's extensive history, the text reflects much of the standard thinking and theorizing found in later volumes on the subject of horror movies. While Clarens is not the first author to discuss the differences between implied and visualized terror, his was the initial work to clearly provide a categorized compendium of such provocative and argumentative

theories. Arranging his subjects in a rough chronological order provided the satisfactory framework in which more important areas could be dealt with extensively without sacrificing any of the lesser ones. This basic argument, too, became standard practice in later books.

Clarens scores highest with his remarkably informative studies of some of the older and more elusive films, although his coverage of the newer entries is always accurate and satisfactory. There are certain opinionized sections that warrant debate (across-the-board rejection of Hammer, Corman and nearly all modern horror thrillers filmed in color), but these only work to further Clarens' authoritative tone and underline the book's integral power as a lasting, conclusive reference work. This in itself is highly unusual, as similar assertions in later studies appear prejudiced and altogether negligible as objective criticism.

The dozens of fantasy cinema books that have followed Clarens have only slightly antiquated "An Illustrated History" (recently retitled "Horror Movies"). Most film re-

searchers and critics still regard this initial effort as the definitive study of the genre, and I personally agree with the view. In terms of seriousness of approach, range of subject matter and overall intelligence in writing and film evaluation, it remains to this day the most satisfying book on the horror cinema market. OVERALL RATING: *****

John Baxter's "Science Fiction in the Cinema" is a flawed yet compelling study of the genre from the primitive days of Melies' "A Trip to the Moon" to the multi-million dollar productions of the late sixties and early seventies. The flaws are comparatively unimportant technical errors such as film release dates, character and actor names, etc., but these minor mistakes occasionally work to reduce the author's credibility and lessen the impact of well-taken points. More importantly, though, Baxter's keen perception and intelligent sense of knowing precisely what makes a science fiction creation remarkable overrides virtually all these technical mishaps, and his book ultimately emerges as an excellent guide to the detached yet strangely intriguing universe of sci-fi cinema.

Baxter is primarily concerned with establishing an accurate definition of the science fiction film "genre" by contrasting it with s-f literature and other motion picture areas. This concentration on film "essence" causes him to overreact to certain movies of only questionable cinematic merit. What the author is responding to in most cases is a clearly felt personality or vision within the film that precisely taps a peculiar sense of filmic science fiction. Once the reader familiarizes himself with Baxter's evaluation standards in this context and tunes

Horror, science fiction and fantasy film book reviews

in on his particular critical wavelength, a direct understanding of his concepts and theories (and their basis) is easily established. Baxter's unique approach devotes a large degree of attention to the inherent "science fictional film" importance of several cinematically lukewarm entries (the "Creature from the Black Lagoon" series, "I Married a Monster from Outer Space," "The Power," etc.), comparatively undistinguished directors (Jack Arnold, Gerd Oswald) and other obscure artists and productions containing important "genre" qualities . . . and little else. Even the accepted blockbusters of the field ("Things to Come," "Forbidden Planet," "2001," etc.) are measured only for their peculiar "s-f" film attributes. This, in essence, is the entire point and purpose of Baxter's study: the dissection, interpretation and ultimate evaluation of the science fiction film genre, and not science fiction or cinema by themselves.

Some of the more unusual and interesting chapters include a meticulous study of Jack Arnold's films and a fascinating overview of s-f on television. The former is an unexpected and imaginative comment on an elusive and extremely subtle artist, the latter a long-awaited tribute to Joseph Stefano's magnificent and under-rated "Outer Limits" TV series. Both reflect Baxter's peculiar yet theoretically justified critical vision.

OVERALL RATING: ****

Of all the horror film reference works that have appeared on the

scene since the Clarens breakthrough, only William K. Everson's new entry from Citadel appears to possess the necessary impact to establish itself as the new definitive study. Everson's writing style is superbly suited to the monumental task, and the production qualities of this expensive volume (\$12.00) are equally impressive. But alas, Clarens still remains master of his field, despite this honest and noteworthy attempt by an accomplished author to claim the territory for himself. The success and failure of "Classics of the Horror Film" illustrates a fascinating paradox about fantasy film literature; the refusal to change and adapt with the times, an inherent problem with horror cinema itself, seems to have stricken most studies of the subject as well.

Everson is clearly one of the finest writers in film research today. Cutting unnecessary and familiar information to a minimum, capturing provocative views and thereby increasing their effectiveness, this splendidly successful and well received historian has revealed facts and examined aspects about horror cinema with astute clarity, intelligence and fine taste. What then, prevents "Classics of the Horror Film" from becoming the definitive study of the genre? One simple Everson statement (and it's all-too-obvious implications): "Night (Curse) of the Demon" (1958) is the last genuine horror classic we've had."

The notion that horror films of the sixties and seventies are negligible as noteworthy efforts has plagued film aficionados since Carlos Clarens first condemned "Horror of

Dracula" as a pedestrian effort some ten years ago. The fact is that only in a genre as lambasted, stagnant and socially crippled as the horror movie can assertions like "they sure don't make 'em like they used to" hold enough critical water to actually keep post '60's efforts out of an overall study called "Classics of the Horror Film." The utter absurdity of this unfortunate thinking among many intelligent fantasy film critics can be easily exemplified by comparative examples in other film areas. Can you imagine a book titled "Dramatic Film Classics" refusing to admit any movie drama made after the forties and fifties as a classic? Would the magnificent comedies of Woody Allen and Mel Brooks be any less "laugh classics" than those of Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers? While it is true that times and tastes change and perhaps certain eras are more inclined to produce an abundance of immortal "classics" than others, to write off entire decades suggests a prejudiced and distorted view of the subject. Maintaining the philosophy that only the old horror films are the good ones can only serve to worsen the retarded evolution of fantasy cinema.

Do not, however, let this major disagreement with the book's theme keep you from it. "Classics of the Horror Film" is a fascinating, highly detailed study of early horror cinema that is a must for all fans of the genre. Perhaps, though, someone will someday publish the "Classics of the Horror Film—Part Two," so we can get the whole story! OVERALL RATING: ****

Cregar as *Mr. Slade* in the masterpiece of horror—"The Lodger." "Regard me as a Lodger," he says as he rents a room in the home of a quiet couple, "not as a guest, and I shant disturb you." *Mr. Slade* was, of course, better known as *Jack The Ripper*.



Laird Cregar

The tragic life of Hollywood's haunted "Jack the Ripper"

He was a large man—six foot three and weighing over 300 pounds—when he wasn't on a crash diet. Offscreen, he was funny, smart and lovable, the darling of the press and public alike. Onscreen, his amazing talent could turn him into a pale, slimy behemoth of evil, with a thick, silky voice that repelled and attracted at the same time—an immense maggot with sad, sick eyes that inspired fear and loathing and pity.

Laird Cregar—the perfect fiend—"Hollywood's favorite 'heavy' in every sense of the word," as the press was fond of calling him. It was an image which became firmly established during his first important year of filmmaking, 1941. It was an image which made him a star at age 25. But more important, perhaps, it was an image that would haunt him for the rest of his brilliant three-year career, and which would tragically and literally destroy him by the time he was 28. For inside Laird Cregar, heaviest of the heavies, was a thin, handsome hero just crying to be let out.

From the very start, Laird showed signs of trying to liberate that slender fellow

within. Between bouts of the Hollywood good life, which would send his weight soaring to 325, he would suddenly crash diet losing as much as 70 pounds in a matter of weeks. For three solid years, newspapers and magazines would report on his various diets, weight losses and gains. His last bizarre attempt to permanently slanderize himself was described by his friend George Sanders, in his "Memoirs of a Cad" as "A tragic resolve ... born in Laird's mind to make himself over into a beautiful young man who would never again be cast as a villain." Tragic, indeed, for the attempt would kill him.

Maybe, that last attempt would never have happened had Hollywood rewarded his earlier diets with different roles. But he was such a perfect villain, such a stylish, elegant, loathsome fat man and they liked him that way.

But even if Hollywood had encouraged him, it may be that Laird's very genes had conspired to make him a naturally large—if not fat—man.

He was born Samuel Laird Cregar, on July 28, 1916, in Philadelphia. He was the

youngest of six brothers—and would grow up the smallest of the lot! After he became famous, he was fond of telling the press about his gigantic brothers, especially the one who measured six foot seven. His family always called him "Tiny," he told reporters, and his pals currently called him "Snooky," he claimed. A bit tongue-in-cheek perhaps, but Laird often came off like the Great Dane who wants to be a tiny lap dog, and there may have been a germ of truth to the joke.

The Cregars were well-to-do folk who traced their ancestry back to England and Scotland. Laird also once claimed to be a descendant of John Wilkes Booth. "He was a ham—and so am I," he said. And since the Booths were also famous for their large boys, the press always believed there was blood as well as ham between them.

Laird's dad was an importer of British wools and had many connections there, which is how Laird, at age 8, found himself attending Winchester Academy in England. He spent two years there—and got his first taste of theater. He spent his summers employed as an onstage



In "Hangover Square," 1945, Cregar played a schizophrenic composer compelled to murder every time he hears a wrong note.

page boy at Stratford-On-Avon in Shakespearean productions.

Laird wrote in his studio biography, "I never wanted to be anything but an actor from that time. I had no desire to be a fireman, a cowboy, an explorer or pirate. There have been times, though, when I wished my ambition weren't so firmly fixed."

Laird's dad died while he

was at Winchester, and he had to go back home. Back in Philadelphia, Mrs. Cregar sold the family business and put the greater part of the money into her boys' educations. Laird attended some pretty fancy private schools—the American equivalent of Winchester Academy and the Episcopal Academy in Philadelphia—both of which no doubt contributed to the stylishness and elegance that would become an integral part of his villainy "act."

He also did lots of writing

at school and seemed as interested in being a playwright as an actor.

Hera, the story of Cregar's short life becomes a bit cloudy. Several sources have him bored with school at age 14, running away from home and, being large even then, getting himself some acting jobs in stock companies.

According to Laird's studio bio, he simply graduated from Episcopal Academy and began hounding producers in the area for jobs.

In any event, he did work for the New York Federal Theater, various stock companies in Pennsylvania, and managed to be an usher, bouncer, department-store clerk and whatnot when body and soul demanded it. Finally, in 1936, he convinced the Philadelphia Rotary Company to give him a scholarship to study acting and playwrighting at the Pasadena Playhouse in California. The Pasadena Playhouse is alma mater to many a super star, but right then, nothing was happening for Laird, and fresh out of funds, he went back home to Philadelphia.

In 1939, Laird went back to the Pasadena Playhouse and seemed, at first, headed straight for disaster. He weighed 290 pounds, for one thing, and there didn't seem to be any roles for fat boys. What's more, the family funds had apparently run out and he couldn't count on any help from them. He was flat broke and desperate. With no money for food or shelter, he slept in the back of a friend's car, while other friends provided sustenance and part-time use of grooming facilities. Not that Laird didn't try to find work—any kind of

work. He later wrote that between 1939 and 1940, "I visited more employment agencies and interviewed more personnel heads than I will ever be able to count. It came to nothing. I was too big for the ordinary job, I guess. It was the fable of the bull in the China shop all over again."

But bulls in China shops—and fat boys—can be funny. In 1940, the Pasadena Playhouse did a play called "The Great American Family," in which there appeared a comic butler. Laird got the role—and was a hit. The critics loved him. But Laird knew that wasn't enough. To get any real attention, he needed a vehicle in which he was the star.

He decided the play which would show his talents best was "Oscar Wilde." Robert Morley, another rather large and lovable dumpling, had made a hit with it on Broadway. Eager, Laird, himself, got the backing to do the show at the Pasadena Playhouse. He then talked the producer into giving him the lead.

To say he was good would be a gross understatement. As one source put it, "He had Los Angeles at his feet." No less than John Barrymore sent him a fan letter, calling Laird the best young actor he'd seen in two decades.

The critics raved and the studios listened—and took some very quick action.

Everyone, it seemed, wanted him, and five studios made very firm offers. He signed with Twentieth Century-Fox. Asked why, Laird later would say, "At the time, there was only one other character man, John Carra-

dine, on the lot, and naturally, we two could never vie for roles."

So fat and skinny presumably had the race to themselves for a while.

The year was 1940, and Laird was 24. He would never again have to starve because of finances—but it wouldn't be long before he found himself periodically starving for other reasons.

He did only two films in

1940, "Oh, Johnny, How You Can Love" and "Granny Got Your Gun." His roles were unimportant, only a warmup for what was coming.

He made his first important film, "Hudson's Bay," in 1941. It starred Paul Muni and Gene Tierney. Laird played comic sidekick and contemporary to Paul Muni, who was con-

"Hangover Square" was Cregar's last film. In it, he was considerably slimmer than his usual hefty self.



siderably older. But Laird's bulk did make him appear older, and he would never play a man as young as he really was. Two years later, he would tiredly tell a newspaper that playing older roles made him feel as though he'd lived at least fifty years in a 27-year lifetime.

His "Hudsons' Bay" character was not meant to be anything more than a stock, funny, fat-guy role. But Laird gave it his all, which was always considerable, and the critics and fans loved him. The picture was released in January, and that very month the New York Times did a piece on him headlined, "Bigger Than Life." He weighed 320 pounds at the

time.

Right after "Hudson's Bay" came "Blood and Sand" and his first role as a baddie. As *Curro*, the sedo-hysterical, sycophantic bull fight fan, he was truly repulsive—brilliantly hateful—and just a mite thinner. He weighed 300 pounds now, and some folks wondered if a weight loss might not damage his image. "I'll drop another 40 or 50 pounds," he told a reporter. "I'll feel better about it and I don't think anyone else can tell the difference."

But it's just possible that even as early as this, he did want everyone to notice the difference. From this point on, the press would constantly be reporting on his weight losses, and would write stories on him with such headlines as, "He's Just

the Right Size for a Greet Big Role."

That same year, he appeared in "Charley's Aunt," starring Jack Benny. A top money-maker, Laird's performance delighted the critics as usual. He played the funny, clessy, urbane fether of 31-year-old Jack Ellison.

His last movie in 1941 was "I Wake Up Screaming"—a mystery-melodrame which has since become a classic of its kind. It is also the film which made Laird Creger a full-fledged star. The studio billed Betty Greble, Victor Mature and Cerole Lendis as the leads, but as the critics put it, "Laird Creger walks away with 'I Weke Up Screaming.'"

Playing a tough, cynical, psychotic cop, he displayed for his audiences a brand-new, unique kind of villain. Here was the creature who lived in the dark places of the mind, if not the world—the pale, white monster with the sed, sick eyes—utterly loethsome and pitiful at the same time. The voice was soft—soft as the sun-denied flesh—and terrifying with its hints of suppressed violence. It was all underplayed, and brilliantly, with a subtle touch of cless and intelligence that in no way merrd the image of the cop with the broken-down emotions. It was Creger at his best—the way fans would want to see him forevermore—if they could. For Laird Creger, the star, it was the beginning. For Laird Creger, the actor and the man, it may well have been the beginning of the end.

RKO took one look at Laird's combination of high-toned elegance and brute villainy and decided they

He struck it rich in "Hello, Frisco, Hello," 1943, playing the hero's gold prospecting friend.



Twentieth Century-Fox, Cregar's studio, saw him as a sort of junior edition of Sidney Greenstreet. In "Rings on Her Fingers," 1942, he played a confidence trickster.



needed him to play the over-refined, acid-tongued Gesteop agent in "Joan of Paris." Fox, which had rewritten Laird's contract, giving him more money and a special-billing clause as a reward for the job he'd done in "I Woke Up Screaming," allowed RKO to borrow him. The film starred Michale Morgan, the heroína who foils Laird and receives one of the meanest slaps in pictures for her troubles.

Back at Fox, he was teamed up with Spring Byington for "Rings on Her Fingers," starring Gena Tiernay and Henry Fonda. He and Spring were a very classy but yo-yo con team which delighted audiences. Apparently, Fox figured there were only two kinds of roles Laird could play—funny, elegant fat men, or terrifying, alagant fat man.

Paramount liked the letter image and borrowed Laird for the classic thriller, "This Gun For Hire." Cregar played the villain, of course, a Fifth Columnist agent so heinous, he would not only hire a hit man to do his killing for him, but double-cross the killer into the bargain. Instead, he made the killer look like a hero—which is precisely what he was supposed to do. To this characterization he added not only his usual wit and style, but a touch of effeminate leachery that was sheer genius. It was his great movie for 1942—and he would have at least one for every year of his career.

Veronica Lake and Robert Preston were billed as the stars. Cregar was second-billed, and beneath his billing came the name of a young actor named Alan Ladd. Ladd played the hit man and became a star. The film didn't hurt Cregar's reputation any either.

Back at Fox, he made "Ten Gentlemen from West Point." Some wags and the press, which loved teasing Laird, claimed he was going to play all ten men simultaneously. Laird laughed and told a reporter, "I once had a weight phobia until Thomas Browne Henry, of the Pasadena Playhouse, told me not to lose a pound, but instead develop a thin man's personality—something I have cultivated assiduously ever since."

But cultivating the personality did not rid him of the phobia apparently.

His last picture for 1942 was "The Black Swan," a pirate saga in which he played *Sir Henry Morgan*. He romped through the swash-buckler with his usual style,

grace and talent, which was considerable. This was the first picture he made with George Sanders, and they became good friends.

Laird's first picture in 1943 was a change of pace, an Alice Faye musical called "Hullo, Frisco, Hello." He wasn't a villain, but the fat funny man Fox alternately cast him as.

In "Heaven Can Wait," with Don Ameche, he played a charming, witty, impeccably groomed *Lucifer*. He had shed some seventy pounds for the role, and was quite attractive as the arch—but not really terrifying—villain. He loved doing this kind of role. The New York Post wrote a story that "The most

"Hudson's Bay," 1941, was Cregar's first film. He played a French fur-trapper.



mountainous Mr. Cregar" had shed seventy pounds and wanted to lose thirty more, bringing his weight down to 220, in hopes of snagging more roles like the urbane devil in "Heaven Can Wait." Laird noted that it was very hard for him to lose weight because he loved to cook. The Post noted that he was on his way to Europe to entertain the troops. Laird, by the way, was never drafted during World War II because of his weight.

His next film was "Holy Matrimony," a comedy with Monty Woolly, in which Laird played an effeminate art dealer—carrying off a Nellie festidousness with great

humor and dignity.

It's interesting to note at this point that Cregar appeared on Lux Radio Theater's version of "The Maltese Falcon." By now, some of the powers at Fox had decided that maybe they had a junior Sidney Greenstreet in their stable who was more versatile, if not better, than the real thing.

Again the Post interviewed him in a story titled "He Had Important Roles From the First." They went on to describe his apartment as having furniture built especially to accommodate his great bulk. Laird confessed to another publication that his ultimate goal was to be a playwright. And, indeed, at one point George Abbott was interested in a play of his, "The Glamorous Guinea Pig," and purportedly wanted to do it on Broadway.

Could it be that Cregar was becoming disillusioned with acting and the kind of material he was getting?

Not exactly, for Fox had cast him in as many comedy roles as villainous ones. However, it was as a villain that he was making his most memorable impressions, and his very next role—possibly his greatest—would, indeed, type him for all time.

It was in the fall of 1943 that Fox began shooting "The Lodger," a version of a very good one, on the life and times of Jack the Ripper. Based on Marie Belloc Lowndes' book, a classic in Ripper literature, the film, too, would become a classic.

Cregar, of course, played the Ripper—and he was the best. He had lost seventy pounds in the weeks before shooting, and it seemed obvious, for the first time,

that he really wasn't a bad-looking fellow. In the character's more logical moments, he was soft, cultivated and, while always menacing, the audience frequently had the sneaking suspicion that he was a whole lot better than anyone he killed. In fact, during those periods, you could almost hope he gets away with the whole thing.

However, in his mad moments he is terrifying, and when he threatens the heroine ... well ... we are human after all.

The film was released in January of 1944. The cast was star-studded—Merle Oberon as the heroine, George Sanders representing Scotland Yard, Sir Cedric Hardwick and Sara Allgood as the heroine's parents. But the film, all the critics agreed, was Laird Cregar's from beginning to end. He had elevated the villain—whether you were for or against him, terrified or sympathetic—to the status of leading man. Maybe not the slender hero Cregar might have wished for—but a leading man all the same.

But such elevation has its pitfalls. For one thing, Laird expressed certain fears that an actor could run out of fresh ideas when it came to portraying bad guys. And there was evidence that his vanity was becoming just a little bruised.

He was once again on a diet, as all of the newspapers faithfully reported, and had bought himself a tiny cabin in Coldwater Canyon. A fan magazine did a home layout, reporting that this time the furniture was of ordinary proportions, and Laird was determined to fit them. He

Cregar was frequently cast as "Mr. Big," as here in "Rings on her Fingers," 1942.





Another "Mr. Big" role: as the dead Gestapo agent in "Joan of Paris," co-starring Michele Morgan and Paul Henreid.

had to lose weight and keep it off if he wanted to move comfortably around his tiny, beloved home.

Georgia Sanders, again in his "Memoirs of a Cad," attributed Laird's dieting to something else. Suggesting that poor Laird could not adjust to being the constant villain, he wrote, "In the preamble of every script, there is a description of the leading characters.

"In the case of Laird's roles, the description would always be that of a sub-human monster. Time and again, Laird would go into the make-up department and ask the chief make-up man what

fantastic distortions of his face would be required for the part.

"The make-up man would invariably answer, 'We want you just the way you are, Mr. Cragar.'"

Hardly flattering, and Sanders suggests that it was just by such means that Hollywood "virtually assassinated" Cragar.

But if the studio wasn't giving him the glamor treatment, the press and Hollywood society certainly was. They wanted to know everything about him—how he lived, why he wasn't married, who was he dating?

His picture was taken with such lovelies as Sonja Henie and Marlene Dietrich. There was a gag picture with Hollywood's favorite tough blonde, Iris Adrienne. And upon losing sixty-five pounds, he was photographed night-clubbing with a young comedienne named Nancy Walker. The press was far too interested in how slander and terrific Laird looked to note anything special about Miss Walker.

On the subject of marriage, he said, "I've got to be absolutely sure she's right before I take the step. I've seen too much phoney marriage around me. I'd hate to take a bride, split up after a year or so, and find myself giving some unworthy person half of my very, very hard-earned goods."

In his own way, Laird was a hero to movie-goers because he was such a fine actor. And there is evidence that bruised vanity or not, he was aware of their appreciation and adulation. When he made personal appearances, that era's version of teeny boppers would leave home

for days to follow wherever he went. And he, himself, appreciated the roles that had helped make him a star. Of his "Lodger" role he said, "It is the kind of plum role which keeps an actor in fear that what he does next will in no way live up to it."

Perhaps it was that fear which would make him want so desperately to do something different.

"The glamor boys get the kisses—I get the hisses," he would laugh. But maybe it hurt a little, too.

In any event, when Fox decided that they wanted to cast Laird as the poison-panned *Waldo Lydacker*, in "Laura," he was enthusiastic. They wanted him to lose weight, and Laird, already savant pounds lighter, went on yet another of his endless diets.

But Otto Pramingar, the film's director, did not want Cragar. He felt that the actor was so identified as the perennial villain, he would be ineffective as the murderer whose identity is not known until the end of the film. It would spoil the film as a who-dunnit.

Cragar may have been hurt, as has been reported, but Pramingar was right. And it was now that Cragar saw the real destructiveness of being typecast. With his success in "The Lodger," he had, indeed, become Hollywood's haunted Jack the Ripper.

But the worse was yet to come.

It was Laird, himself, who persuaded Fox to buy the rights to "Hangover Square," a novel about a young, schizophrenic murderer, starring none other than himself.



On loan to Paramount, Cregar played the double-crossing "Mr. Big" who hires Alan Ladd in "This Gun For Hire," 1942.

abdominal surgery that would somehow keep him from eating so much. Obviously, he was never going to play Jack the Ripper—or any other villain—again.

Meanwhile, back on the set, he was reported blowing lines and needing retakes—something which was very rare for him.

The picture was finished in the fall of 1944—though it wouldn't be released until 1945. Laird's weight loss was very noticeable, and once again, the papers wanted to know all about it.

"I believe I'm a pretty good actor. I'd rather not become typed as a heavy," he told the papers. "And if a more slender physique will open a way to new roles . . . I'm going to do my part to get them."

At about this time, Photoplay, most prestigious of the fan magazines, was preparing its Christmas issues. It asked a number of stars to write letters to Santa Claus asking for something they wanted more than anything else. Laird wrote:

"Dear Santa,

"As one large man to another—surely you know what I mean when I say the only thing I want out of your peck is a new kind of screen role. Okay, I'm not exactly a small guy. Neither are you. But do I have to be a sinister, over-sized guy year after year?"

Cregar would be dead before Christmas arrived. Determined to make himself over, he entered a Los Angeles hospital on December fifth for the first step of his self-beautification program, the abdominal surgery that would hopefully curb his appetite.

However, years of crash dieting—most especially that recent hundred-pound weight loss—had taken their toll on his heart. Five days after surgery, he had a heart attack. He relapsed, but later that night died of another heart attack. It was December 9, 1944, and he was twenty-eight years old.

"Hengover Square" was released in January of 1945. He got top billing and the usual raves of the critics who likened the role to his "Lodger" role. Even in the grave, Jack the Ripper could not rest in peace.

Had Hollywood assassinated Laird Cregar? Had his career been haunted by an image that had culminated itself in his greatest role, Jack the Ripper? Could he ever have been that slender leading man imprisoned within him?

As one friend in the industry put it, "He had to be a big guy to contain the largesse of talent and spirit that was Laird Cregar. Some ordinary, average-sized leading men just couldn't have done it. Maybe we all should have told Laird that while we had the chance."

In a sense, even today, Laird Cregar's career is still haunted by the unique villains he played. That is how we remember him—know him—love him. There is no film buff of any ilk—and certainly no horror-film fan—who does not know the motion pictures of Laird Cregar. His fans are as loved as any romantic hero's. And if he didn't play the full range of roles of which he was capable—well, we'd still stay up half the night to watch him play Jack the Ripper.

—BARBARA G. JACKSON

Earth
Invaded by Aliens!

Spacemen
Visit Hostile Planets!

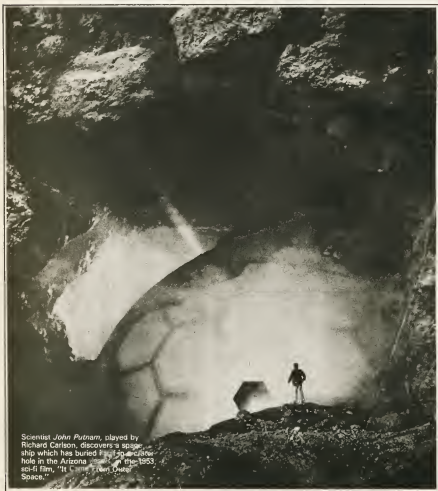
THE SPACE MONSTER BOOK

The Martians!
The Monsters!
The Movies!



Introduction: Invasion of the BEMs

A few years ago we were terrified
of aliens from outer space -
now we're trying to contact them!



Scientist John Putnam, played by Richard Carlson, discovers a spaceship which has buried itself in a crater hole in the Arizona desert in the 1953 sci-fi film, "It Came From Outer Space."

During the '20's and '30's, the heyday of the science-fiction pulp magazines, fans were thrilled by lurid covers depicting monsters from outer space. These creatures were often shown carrying off beautiful, struggling Earth maidens. In the jargon of the sci-fi fans, the creatures came to be called BEM's or Bug-Eyed Monsters.

Sci-fi writers usually assumed that the BEM's were deadly enemies of mankind, who had come from other planets of the solar system with the purpose of destroying Earth. The BEM's might be "blue-shelled Mercurians," or "slimy, many-tentacled Venusians," but no one questioned that fact that these monstrous creatures lusted after Earth women, and, despite biological differences, were capable of taking these unfortunate females as their mates.

During the same decades that the pulps were flourishing, serious scientists insisted that such sci-fi tales were complete nonsense. But they went further, and said that any kind of life on other planets of the solar system was most unlikely; some went so far as to say it was impossible.

According to scientists, no other planet in the solar system could support life "as we know it."

Then came World War II, followed by the era of unmanned space satellites, and finally, in 1969, the first landing on the Moon. Scientists began to revise their opinions regarding the possibility of life on other planets. Today, there are projects going forward with the aim of communicating with beings on other planets in our solar system, and those of other galaxies, billions of light years away.

One such attempt to communicate took place on March 3, 1972, when the *Pioneer 10* spacecraft was launched from Cape Kennedy. The *Pioneer 10* was the first space vehicle designed to explore the asteroids between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, and later, the environment of Jupiter, itself. Then, accelerated by Jupiter's gravity, *Pioneer 10* became the first man-made object to leave our solar system.

Because scientists believe that this

spacecraft may encounter some space vehicle from another world, a very unusual message was placed aboard. The message is etched on a small gold-anodized aluminum plate, attached to the antenna support struts of the *Pioneer 10*. It shows symbols indicating the location of our planet, and two figures, those of a man and woman. The fact that NASA approved the sending of the plaque is proof positive that its scientists believe it may be seen by beings from outer space, and that these beings will be advanced enough in science to understand and interpret the symbols shown.

There have been a number of objections to the sending of the *Pioneer 10* plaque: some from scientists and others from laymen. The scientists have said that perhaps some details of the plaque will not be understood by extra-terrestrials, even if it should be found. Some have said that the plaque might not even be visible to beings from outer space who have not developed the sense of sight at visible wavelengths.

Others have wondered whether such beings would understand the mathematical notations: the relative distances of the planets from the Sun, for example, are shown by binary notation at the bottom of the plaque, which indicates that we use base-10 arithmetic. However, it is possible that far different mathematical systems might be used in the far-flung reaches of the galaxy.

Laymen, on the other hand, have protested because the figures on the plaques are nude. They fear that our extra-terrestrial neighbors might get the wrong idea about our moral standards. Feminists raised the objection that while the man on the plaque has a hand raised in greeting to the denizens of outer space, the woman stands passively behind him. Others say that the man and woman should have been drawn standing hand in hand.

One interesting thing about the *Pioneer 10* plaque, apart from these objections, is the belief held by so many laymen that there is, indeed, life in outer space; that billions of years from now, other beings may

find and understand a communication from Earth.

The idea of life on other planets is not a new one, of course. In early Roman times, Lucian of Samasota wrote what was perhaps the world's first sci-fi story. It was called the "True History," and described a trip to the Moon, which, he thought, was populated by other intelligent beings. Fortunately, the Romans, in some ways, were given considerable freedom of thought by their leaders.

Giordano Bruno, writing in 1600, was not so fortunate. He was burned at the stake for publishing the heretical notion that there were other worlds in the solar system, and other beings inhabiting those worlds.

In the centuries that followed, however, writers such as Emanuel Swedenborg, Immanuel Kant and Johannes Kepler were free to write that other planets were inhabited. The British astronomer, William Herschel put forth the theory that even the Sun might be inhabited.

In our own century, as has been shown, there has been a wide difference of opinion regarding the possibility of life in outer space, among both scientists and laymen. Even those who conceded that such life was possible, disagreed as to what forms it might take.

If there were men in outer space, what would they be like? Would they be hostile or friendly, monsters or god-like beings? While some sci-fi writers created their Bug-Eyed Monsters, others wrote about beings from other worlds who were more complex and interesting. In his classic novel, "War of the Worlds," H.G. Wells describes the Martians as super beings, more scientifically advanced than Earthmen, but destructive, and horrible to look at.

"Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedgelike lower lip . . ." He also describes the "Gorgon groups of tentacles, the oily brown skin."

Wells reflected the feeling of many, when he naturally assumed



Schoolteacher *Ellen Fields*, played by Barbara Rush, is stopped on a lonely stretch of highway by a strange being from the space world in "It Came From Outer Space."

that what was alien must be repulsive and dangerous. "Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse," he wrote, "I was overcome with disgust and dread."

On October 30, 1938, Orson Welles represented the radio play, "Invasion from Mars." To make the story more believable the script was done in the form of a news broadcast, and countless listeners phoned their local police, believing that America was indeed being attacked by Martians. In New Jersey, some families tried to escape the "Martian invasion," by getting into their cars and driving off, tying up traffic for miles.

But while some writers, and their audiences, assumed that visitors from outer space would destroy Earth, there has always been another theory as well: that these beings,

with their advanced science, would be able, and willing, to save Earth from its own self-destructive tendencies. Perhaps today's scientists, with their space probes, are hoping that this may be the case.

With the invention of the atomic bomb, there has been the feeling that perhaps advanced life forms from other planets have become aware of our presence, and hope to stop us before we not only blow ourselves up, but spread destruction throughout the universe. Whether they will try to do this by reason or force is a matter of opinion.

One danger we face, in trying to make contact with other planets is a practical and believable one. Suppose life on other worlds carries various types of bacteria unknown on Earth. If our astronauts were to bring back certain strains of bacteria for which our scientists had no antidotes, a plague could sweep the Earth. Just as the South Sea islanders had no natural immunity to diseases brought by ships from

Europe so we would have no immunity to a plague from outer space. In several works of fiction, among them the best-selling book "The Andromeda Strain," this theory is carefully and believably developed.

Although most speculation about life on other planets raises fears for the safety of men on Earth, some writers, and scientists, have raised the opposite question. Will we, in our space exploration, be a danger to the life forms on other worlds?

In March, 1975, the New York Times carried an article about the discovery of bacteria in 24 samples of soil from one of the driest, coldest regions of the Earth. Scientists, studying these samples, from the Wright Valley area of Antarctica, found that they contained life forms, however, primitive, which could be reactivated under the proper conditions.

This leads to the fear that "microbes carried to Mars may proliferate there, eliminating any

chance of learning whether that planet had any life of its own."

In other words, instead of Martian life being a threat to us, we might threaten certain life forms on Mars! Of course, when we speak of life on other planets, we usually think of creatures like ourselves, but life can take countless forms, many of which even our scientists can not yet imagine.

Whether beings from outer space are a threat to mankind or not, scientists are making serious efforts to communicate with them. Now, for the first time, we have the tools for such communication. There is, for example, the 1,000 foot diameter radio telescope of the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center, run by Cornell University in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. The remarkable device would be able to communicate with an identical copy of itself anywhere in the Milky Way Galaxy. This means that we could communicate over tens of thousands of light-years, into a volume containing hundreds of billions of stars.

While it is impossible to imagine the changes that would be made in our civilization if and when we could communicate with beings from outer space, we can make certain assumptions. Not only would our sciences be expanded and changed by such contact, but politics, sociology and religion, would also be influenced.

The nations of the Earth might well be brought together, even before such contact is made. In 1971, for example, when a scientific conference was held in Soviet Armenia, to explore the possibilities of extra-terrestrial life, a delegation from the United States was invited to exchange ideas with scientists from the Iron Curtain countries.

Perhaps scientists are realizing that in order to explore outer space and make contact with extra-terrestrial life, nations will have to pool their resources, human and technological. If this is done, the results could be beneficial even years before any such contact is made. Perhaps, after centuries of division among the nations of Earth, we could at least see ourselves for what we are: human beings inhabiting a tiny speck of Earth in a vast cosmos. Such thinking could bring about a certain

humility, a sense of our place in the scheme of things.

As Kepler wrote, back in the Sixteenth Century,

"But who shall dwell in these worlds, if they be inhabited? . . . Are we or they, Lords of the World? . . . And how are all things made for man?"

Richard Carlson starred in "It Came From Outer Space" as a scientist who discovers that invisible space beings have invaded the earth. The Universal Picture was based on a Ray Bradbury story, filmed in 3D and released in 1953.



by Gary Gerani

Chapter One: Space Movies

The notion that intelligent life might exist on worlds other than our own, has inspired writers for centuries. The visual potential for effectively portraying these aliens from other planets, however, was largely ignored until the advent of the cinema in the early 1900's. The first real attempt to introduce science fiction to the screen was Georges Méliès' "A Trip to the Moon" (1902), a sixteen-minute production in which unlikely space travelers first project themselves into the wining, pained expression of a craggy-faced moon, then uncover a strange breed of "Selenites" living on the barren sphere. Primitive and without the slightest pretense toward scientific accuracy, "A Trip to the Moon" is nevertheless an important breakthrough in the space alien's cinematic development. Soon more ambitious and substantial productions would transform the novelty of science fiction into a proven motion picture genre, and a unique playground for speculative fantasy.

In 1919 came the first film version of H.G. Wells' "First Men in the Moon." It was produced in England. Around the same period, Denmark's Forest Holger-Madsen directed "Heaven Ship,"

which offered a casual expedition to Mars and an idyllic, placid vision of life on the mysterious red planet. Most intriguing of all these early attempts, though, was Russia's often noted "Aelita." Based on the popular novel by Alexei Tolstoy, the film depicted the landing of Russian astronauts on Mars, where the Earthmen instigate an organized revolt by enslaved aliens against their vindictive Martian masters. Employing a dramatic situation far more intense than previous space oddities, "Aelita" introduced maturity into science fiction cinema by combining fanciful effects and landscapes with an important social theme.

In 1928 came Fritz Lang's elusive "Girl in the Moon." Boasting some fine technical effects on the depiction of a rocketship launching, the film is rumored to have encountered trouble with the Hitler regime. Lang's movie spacecraft was remarkably similar to the prototype rocket weapons then being constructed in Germany. This may account for why so few negatives of this film are in existence today.

As scientifically innocent as silent attempts at sci-fi, were the space serials. Undoubtedly, the most popular of these weekly delights is Universal's "Flash Gordon" (1936), based on Alex Raymond's comic strip and introducing former swimming star Buster Crabbe. As the athletic son of a renowned scientist, Crabbe encounters a wide variety of unworlly creatures on the planet Mongo, a gaseous sphere of ornate castles and craggy mountainsides whose orbit is mysteriously controlled by an Oriental-based despot named

Ming. Among the more formidable opponents challenging Flash are the *Monkey Men*, *Shark Men*, *Haw Men* and other fanciful aliens rooted firmly in the spirit of comic strip fiction. The Eartman even single handedly defeats an angry dragon-creature called the *Göcko*, in reality a ludicrously animated puppet thrown together by the Universal special effects department. But the usual standards for criticism seem strangely harsh when evaluating "Flash Gordon." It was fast-paced, clever – and good fun!

Two sequels to the original were "Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars" (1938) and "Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe" (1940). Both covered about the same imaginative territory as the first, although "Mars" did treat viewers to the marvelous *Clay People*; rubbery cave dwellers with slimey personalities and appearances to match.

Elsewhere in Hollywood's cheaply manufactured universe, "The Purple Monster Strikes" (1945), pitted a stalwart Republic hero against the advanced weaponry of Martian science. Essentially souped-up gangster melodramas, the space serials can not really be counted as intelligent science fiction.

Also prominent on a week-to-week basis were "Buck Rogers" (1939), "Flying Disc Man from Mars" (1950), "King of the Rocketmen" (1949), "Zombies of the Stratosphere" (1952), "Radar Men from the Moon" (1951), among others. But just as the serial trend began to peter out, a new, thoroughly different approach to outer space fiction suddenly emerged

Chapter Two: The Universe Next Door

After World War II, a great apprehension gripped Americans as the threat of atomic warfare and nuclear destruction hung in the air. Man had proven himself capable of obliterating his planet. Perhaps as an escape from the ominous threats of reality, sci-fi authors speculated about mass-invasions from futuristic planets with weaponry so advanced it

belittled our own "ultimate destroyer."

The sensational "flying saucer" scares also contributed largely to the public's preoccupation with outer space terrors. Reports of saucer landings and sightings increased as several well-known and respectable scientists publicly proclaimed their belief in these mysterious

visitations from our extra-terrestrial neighbors. Interest in space travel and the possibility of life on other planets became a major topic of conversation. The universe was, after all, right next door!

On the screen, war between worlds (as opposed to nations) stood as warnings against use of atomic weapons by exaggerating the situation into a fantasy framework. Aliens were almost always loathsome, one-dimensional villains with remarkable scientific prowess and machinery.

"The Thing from Another World," released in 1951 by RKO Radio Pictures, has been described as the blueprint for the science fiction films of its decade. The same paranoia, the same fear of the unknown, the same militaristic defensiveness that characterized the fifties were all clearly established in Howard Hawk's film. "The Thing" summarized the film industry's feeling toward the science fictional alien in no uncertain terms. Malevolence, evil and fearsome horror dwelled in the outer reaches of the galaxy, and if and when these monsters threatened our peace-loving sphere, the stout soldiers of Earth would bravely defend our world and strike a resounding blow for justice. The obvious parallel between this theme and America's political climate during the fifties is unmistakable: the different, the unusual and the strange were synonymous with evil.

"The Thing's" plotline was adapted from "Who Goes There," a popular pulp story written by John Campbell, one of the field's top authors.

The idea of visualizing the alien visitor as an embodiment of every distasteful element possible, wrought cries of outrage from science fiction mavens, but the film did launch a new sci-fi cycle in Hollywood, and the Hawks film established a peculiar new breed of visually-oriented devotees. These fans not only accepted aliens of grotesque



Michael Rennie as Kletau, the super-intelligent alien of 20th Century-Fox's 1951 "The Day the Earth Stood Still." Rennie holds out a gift for our President. A trigger-happy soldier shoots it out of his hand.

appearance, they demanded them!

"The Thing" is a tautly paced and neatly directed thriller with an electric personality never duplicated in later imitations. Producer Hawks wastes little time in introducing the principals, an Air Force outfit stationed in the Arctic and commanded by Captain Patrick Hendry (Kenneth Tobey), who believes in hy-the-book order and security, and a team of scientific researchers led by Dr. Carrington, a cracker-jack caricature of intellectual snobbery. The arrival of a spacecraft, containing a murderous alien monstrosity, a humanoid vegetable with an unsavory thirst for blood, transforms their isolated base into a claustrophobic vacuum of terror and tragedy. The scientists are prepared to take any risk in the misguided name of scientific advancement; the military responds with rules and regulations. Trapped within an arc of electricity, every last cell of the monster is finally reduced to ashes, as law and order prevail over this foreign threat to our unsuspecting world. Fortifying this paranoia, a newscaster urges everyone to beware the terrors of

the universe and advises that we, with defensive scrutiny, "keep watching the skies."

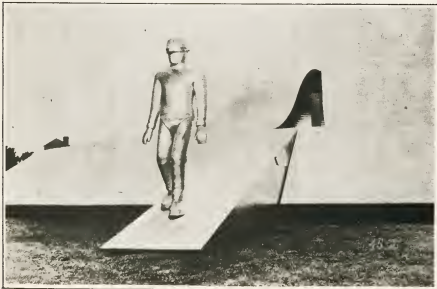
The warning made sense; motion picture skies were shortly filled with flying saucers, death rays and other hostile advances from worlds beyond.

America's widespread interest in the flying saucer scares prompted 20th Century-Fox to do "The Day the Earth Stood Still," (1951) a high-budgeted science fiction film to be directed by Robert Wise. Together with scriptwriter Edmund H. North, Wise fashioned an extremely literate space alien in the dignified Klatau (Michael Rennie). This curious traveler from the limitless reaches of space, and Gort, his robot, land in Washington, D.C., and request a meeting with representatives from every corner of the globe. When this request is turned down, Klatau seeks similar aid from the

top scientists of Earth and turns off electricity all over the world for one hour to prove he means business. The authorities logically consider him a threat and promptly gun him down in cold blood. Luckily, Klatau had given a sympathetic Earth woman (Patricia Neal) an important message for the robot Gort, preventing the metallic sentry from destroying our planet upon discovery of his master's death. Klatau is mysteriously resurrected to deliver his final eulogy to the people of Earth: either we abandon our aggressive tendencies or we face instant obliteration from the unnamed powers of the universe.

It is difficult to find fault with the production elements of "The Day the Earth Stood Still." Fox obviously gave it the same luxurious treatment "strait" films from that studio received. The cast consisted of major performers, not second-rate contract players. It is, in short, a beautiful movie. The simple-yet-effective special effects have a dignified, restrained quality about them, and Barnard Herrman's inspired musical scores captures the precise mood of awe and mystery inherent in the visuals.

Gort, Michael Rennie's robot in "The Day the Earth Stood Still." His death ray melted guns, tanks — even men!



Chapter Three: "The War of the Worlds"

One of the most impressive of all space thrillers is George Pal's production of "The War of the Worlds," 1953. The task of bringing H.G. Wells' classic science fiction tale to the screen appeared so monumental, that the property sat on the Paramount shelves for almost twenty years before Pal decided to take a whack at filming it. A reported \$2,000,000 was spent for this purpose, most of it for elaborate special effects. What ultimately emerged was a neatly directed thriller (Byron Haskin), highlighted by the stupendous visuals and a brilliant use of Technicolor. The Martian war machines are most impressive, and the aliens themselves, with television eyes and elongated suction-cup fingers, are equally well-constructed and played.

More than six months of painstaking special effects work went into the creation of "The War of the Worlds," with an additional two months for opticals. The greatest problem facing the Paramount special effects wizards was building and operating the war-like Martian machines. Pal decided to have them function electrically, as opposed to the mechanical means of operation implied in Wells' story, and the first technical problem was the creation of three pulsating beams of static electricity "supporting" each machine like imaginary legs. A high-voltage electrical discharge of some one million volts was fed down to the legs from wires suspended from an overhead rig on the sound stage. A high velocity blower was then used from behind to force sparks down the legs. Tests of this procedure under controlled conditions produced spectacular results, but there was one very real danger: generating a million

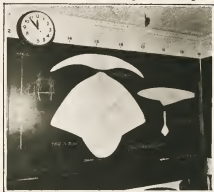
volts on a regular sound stage could easily set the studio on fire, and so this concept was reluctantly abandoned.

Three miniature Martian war machines were built, constructed from copper to maintain the reddish hue always associated with the planet. They were flat, semi-disk shaped objects with long cobra necks and wing-tip flame throwers. Each machine was operated by fifteen hair-fine wires connected to a device on an overhead track. By means of these wires, the cobra neck, the scanning eye and other areas were made to operate properly. The destructive fire-rays emanating from the machines were actually burning welding wire. As the wire melted, a blow torch was set up behind it, blowing the wire out, creating the illusion of an alien "death ray."

An artist's drawing of one of the Martian space ships attacking an earth city.



How to Make a Space Ship



Studio designers figure out the blue prints for the Martian space ships to be used in "The War of the Worlds" on a large blackboard. Shown are top, side and front views.

Designers and prop men assemble the space ship end attach the wires that will make it move realistically.



An electrician hooks up the space ship's "goose neck." Power for lights and movement is fed to the ship through coiling wires.

While construction of the ship progresses, artists prepare "story boards," using miniatures as models. These drawings help the director and special effects men visualize how they will film the attack of the space ships.



The ship is constructed in the prop shop, then painted. Note other props, for other films, in background.



Lights! Camera! Action! As earth is invaded. One of several attack sequences from "The War of the World."



Technicians rig the space ships on the studio set, making last-minute adjustment before filming begins.



Rigged and wired, one of the completed ships "acts" out the attack the artist has imagined.



Gene Barry and Ann Robinson examine the probing "eye" of a Martian space ship in George Paul's "The War of the Worlds," 1953.

Alone in a farm house, Ann Robinson feels something reach out and touch her.



She turns in horror to see one of the Martian space men.





Three soldiers attempt to fight off the Martians.



At the conclusion of "The War of the Worlds," the Martian space ships begin to crash.



The Martians fell victim to Earth's deadliest disease — the common cold — against which they have no defense.

Chapter Four: Other Invasions

The success of "The War of the Worlds" inspired countless imitations, none of which approached the expensive and intelligent handling afforded by Pal. "Earth vs. the Flying Saucers" (1956), "The Mysterians" (1969) and other lesser efforts hoping to cash-in on the mass destruction craze, proliferated throughout the decade, generally offering imaginative special effects but little else.

Extensive optical work proved too expensive for some producers, and new, budget-conscious approaches to the alien invasion concept were developed in modestly-budgeted thrillers like

Earth receives a warning from saucer-men in "Earth vs. the Flying Saucers," that it must surrender or die. Joan Taylor, between scenes, poses with one of the aliens.



"Invasion of the Saucer-men" (1957), "Not of this Earth" (1957) and "Plan Nine from Outer Space" (1958). In order to create suspense without elaborate special effects, these films opted for the "horror film" techniques of shock cuts and ugly monsters to satisfy viewers. Stronger emphasis was placed on the behavioral patterns and lifestyles of the aliens. In "Invisible Invaders," for example, the extraterrestrials are arrogant, transparent entities who possess the bodies of dead men. "Killers from Space" showed an unusual positive side to their nature when they save the life of a downed test pilot by performing open-heart surgery. And "The Astounding She Monster," an enthralling Amazon glowing with radioactivity, thwarts the plans of some hapless gangsters before returning to her native planet, a better woman for doing so!

But not all aliens were intelligent bumanoids. Hollywood's chief make-up artists and special effects personnel had a veritable field day with space monsters of every conceivable shape and size. There was a titanic turkey protected by a nuclear force field in "The Giant Claw" (1957); man-killing plants in Britain's "The Day of the Trifids" (1962); the deadly parasitic slugs of "The Brain Eaters" (1958) and, of course, several oozing, gelatinous blobs of destruction in films like "The Blob" (1958), "The Space Children" (1958), "Spacemaster X-7" (1959), "Teenagers from Outer Space" (1958), "X . . . The Unknown" (1957) and "The Crawling Eye" (1958), the latter two both above-par entries from England. Giant insects provided thrills and were economical too. In "Killers from Space" and "The Cosmic Monsters," simple matte work and forced perspective easily conveyed the illusion of gigantic bugs on the rampage.

"Robot Monster" (1953) had the advantage of 3-D photography in its favor, but nothing could reduce the laughable reaction to the title character's ridiculous appearance. This nasty invader calling himself *Ro-man* (no insult to Italian-Americans



In "Invasion of the Saucer Men," 1957, kids spotted invaders from outer space. The film tried to spoof sci-fi, but failed.

intended) was essentially a gorilla wearing a diving bell helmet surrounded by curious soap bubbles emanating from his "futuristic" equipment. More convincing was "Kronos" (1957), a gigantic storehouse of pure energy stomping across the countryside in search of nuclear "food." The most effective scenes in "Target: Earth!" (1954) avoided showing the film's robot invaders, clumsy boogiemens with built-in laser beams.

Deserving a special note is Ray Harryhausen's imaginative creation for "20 Million Miles to Earth" (1957). The *Ymir*, a sort of strange combination of Rhinoceros and Tyrannosaurus Rex, eerily batches from a gelatinous "egg" at an early point in the film, then rampages through the historic ruins of Rome later on. According to astronaut William Hopper, the creature was a specimen of the animal life on Venus, and it was premature contact with the Earth's atmosphere that caused the monster's phenomenal growth. Harryhausen's stop motion work was flawless, and the dramatic and imaginative image of the *Ymir* makes one wonder why more outer space entities weren't animated for the screen.

Chapter Five: Dehumanization

One of the "Invaders from Mars" carries off Helena Carter in the 1953 release.



"Invaders from Mars," 1953, concerned a small boy who witnesses an invasion from outer space. Here, soliders finally get inside the space ship.

The "Invaders from Mars" trap Jimmy Hunt and Helena Carter, as his mother.



Loss of individuality is the ultimate horror in Don Siegal's 1956 classic, "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." Approaching the sci-fi concept in reverse (i.e., the human element being of primary interest), Siegal captures a sense of subtle terror more devastating than a thousand flying saucer attacks. He assaults the viewer directly on everyday ground, using emotion to create a personal terror. It is not so important that people are being "taken over" by grotesque seed pods from outer space; what lingers in the viewer's mind is the terrible fear of abandoning our humanity and capacity to love and be loved. Human beings can afford the loss



"It — The Terror from Beyond Space," 1958, was a blood-drinking alien. Originally the film was titled, "It — The Vampire from Beyond Space."

of property, possessions, even essential pride, but they cannot survive without their souls. Siegal was aware of this essential fear when he elected to place the dramatic emphasis of his story on it rather than focusing on the comparatively unimportant details of the pods and their celestial origins.

Few sci-fi efforts attempt Siegal's approach. "The Man from Planet X" (1951) and "It Came from Outer Space" (1953) treat the subject with a cold scientific detachment. In the latter film, the *Xenomorphs*, shapeless beings from a far away planet, are merely "using" Earthly bodies to move about town inconspicuously as they gather the necessary electrical materials to repair their disabled space vehicle.

The cold, emotionless Earth specimens of "It Conquered the World" (1957) and "The Human Duplicators" (1964) are the children of today's computerized society, made worse by insidious alien forces. Occasionally there is a struggle to resist this dehumanization. The tormented woman of "The Unearthly Stranger" (1964) and the confused invader troubled by a sampling of Earth emotions in "I Married a Monster from Outer Space" (1958) represent a strong, basic humanity clearly evident even under incredibly cruel and inhuman pressures.

"Planet of the Vampires," 1965, was another feature to combine vampirism with sci-fi.





Barry Sullivan and two co-horts brave another world in "Planet of the Vampires," from American International.

"The Men from Planet X," 1951, pictured space aliens as sharp-nosed and squint-eyed.

Only one sci-fil thriller employed the dehumanization element from a child's impressionable prospective. "Invaders from Mars" (1953) is an absolutely terrifying experience, and one of the few fantasy works this author does not recommend for younger viewers. Using the frightening images and sounds that populate a nightmare, director William Cameron Menzies turns a child's parents against him and strikes an immediate cord—like Siegal—with easily relatable emotions. The soul-sapping in this case is accomplished via a small glass crystal implanted behind the victim's neck. The culprit is a tentacled Martian intelligence encased in a transparent globe with a harsh, unfeeling expression and arresting alien eyes. The brain uses a race of synthetically-bred "mutants" to do its dirty work, swallowing up unsuspecting humans in the earth (a terrifying and unsettling psychological image) and then subjugating their free thought. The concept is not new, but from the standpoint of a young boy it adopts an even more shattering intensity. "Invaders from Mars" stands as one of the few genuine "horror" films ever made.



**Chapter Six:
England and
Prof. Quatermass**

The art work and poster for the Hammer sci-fi film, "Five Million Years to Earth."



Andrew Keir plays Professor Quatermass. In the Nickin Institute, he examines one of the Martians found in the missile buried deep in the London subway.

Dr. Roney, played by James Donald, reconstructs the kind of apeman unearthed with the space ship.



Great Britain entered the science fiction field with some noteworthy forerunners of the genre. Menzies' "Things to Come" and some of the early silent efforts had their origins in England, but for the most part the comparatively modest English film industry could not compete with Hollywood's lavish sci-fi extravaganzas.

One series of films, however, reached levels of maturity and sophistication that clearly outclassed most of the commercial melters produced in the States. Nigel Kneale, one of England's finest sci-fi-ers conceived the original stories and screenplays

to the Quatermass films, three carefully thought out and executed fantasy works of the highest caliber.

Kneale's anti-social protagonist, a bullish rocket engineer named Bernard Quatermass, tackles the problem of an astronaut slowly metamorphasizing into an alien being in "The Creeping Unknown" (1956). Directed on a feverish note by Val Guest, the film offered science fiction concepts and theories that instantly distinguished it. So successful was this unique approach to the fantastic, that the good doctor (played by Brian Donlevy) delivered an encore



While workers clear mud away from the space ship, a soldier crawls inside and comes out screaming.

The soldier says he has seen horrible creatures in the space ship.



Stadden, played by Duncan Lamont, has been "taken over" by the strange power from the space ship.

Barbara, played by Barbara Shelley, feels herself drawn by some power to the missile.





Quatermass and Roney finally get into the secret compartment of the space ship to find violently colored glass honeycombs containing Martian insects.

With the assistance of Barbara, Quatermass and Roney hope to translate the signals coming from the ship, and get a picture of what's inside. She gets the picture, all right — and it's horrible!



performance in "Enemy from Space," and the cerebral plotting once again drew kudos from sci-fi enthusiasts.

The third and final *Quatermass* entry, my candidate for the finest sci-fi movie ever, was filmed a decade later, when audience sophistication was developed enough to appreciate some of its more unusual conceptual ideas. "Five Million Years to Earth," distributed by Hammer Films in 1967, is the culmination of Kneele's wildly fantastic approach to the science fiction genre.

The tale concerns the discovery of a buried spaceship at a London excavation site along with fossilized skeletons of prehistoric ape-men. When the craft is finally entered, the remains of weird, insect-like aliens are uncovered. *Quatermass* surmises that these creatures (from Mars) visited the Earth in its early stages, biologically altered the structure of the ape-men found on our planet and evolved them into human beings. The idea was to colonize the Earth by proxy, and the human race itself, according to the professor's theory, is merely

Barbara explains she must work quickly on the Martian insects before they decay completely.



Professor Quatermass contemplates a Martian insect — and maybe vice versa.

Roney and Quatermass remove a decaying insect from the space ship.



Quatermass warns the press to get away from the missile. As he does, the Martian space ship comes alive and panics the crowd.



an extension of the ancient Martian culture.

Kneale also ties in man's age-old fear of the Devil, represented by the horned insects who enslaved our race in Earth's past. When the spaceship itself finally materializes into a glowing, ghostly image of the devil's evil visage, *Quatermass* rescues London from the energy-absorbing threat by utilizing Satan's ancient enemy—iron—as a steel tower is maneuvered into the terrible thing, obliterating it on contact. Sophisticated and unusual, "Five Million Years to Earth" is a superb example of imaginative sci-fi and the film medium merging to produce a work of lasting importance.

Chapter Seven: Visits to Hostile Planets

Leslie Neilson, nearest screen, and a group of space travelers from Earth approach Altair-4, the "Forbidden Planet."



MGM's "Forbidden Planet," takes place on a studio-created planet composed of stark backdrops and magnificent matte paintings. The film is justifiably considered one of the most imaginative and innovative genre pieces in that it intelligently employed elements of sci-fi literature instead of the action-adventure basics of competitive entries. Indeed, there is a monster present on the "Forbidden Planet," but one rooted in the imagination of written sci-fi, rather than the tired dramatics of the screen.

Scientist Walter Pidgeon relates to space patrolmen Leslie Neilson and Warren Stevens the

story of the *Krel*, incredibly advanced aliens who, at the peak of their accomplishments, suddenly vanished from the face of their planet in a single night. When several members of Neilson's patrol are savagely murdered by an incomprehensible force, the mystery is finally solved. The *Krel*, working on the idea of developing a civilization without instrumentality, neglected to consider their own subconscious hates and fears, and delivered these ravenous emotions enough power to wipe out their entire culture. Pidgeon, enraged by the intervention of the space patrol, unwittingly used his

artificially-bolstered brain to resurrect these same subconscious demons. His "Id," the physical manifestation of all his pent-up emotions, lash out at his imagined enemies with the destructive force of a hurricane.

For 1956, this was all pretty cerebral stuff, and many science fiction enthusiasts, oriented toward the usual "shoot-em-ups," were understandably confused. But more were delighted, even ecstatic over the mature concept and handling and foresaw a new era of science fiction cinema just behind the horizon. "Planet's" producers, depicted "Id" as some form of alien monstrosity. Tech-

nicians from the Walt Disney complex were hired to render animation services in its conception and the final "cartoon" is not a total success. But there is no debate about the overall aesthetic success of "Forbidden Planet." Even today many sci-fi critics consider it the finest example of the cinema's efforts in the genre, and it is undoubtedly an important step in the field's maturing.

Visits to alien worlds were never quite as popular as alien appearances here. "Flight to Mars," (1951) shot in color, offered little imagination in its depiction of an alien world and its inhabitants, who were mostly grade-B character actors in strange outfits. "Rocketship X-M" (1951), rushed into theatrical distribution just a few months before Pal's more ambitious "Destination Moon," conjectures about a past civilization on the red planet. And perhaps as an indication of science's utter frustration over the baffling extinction of the dinosaur, "King Dinosaur" (1953), "Woman of the Prehistoric Planet" (1966), "Voyage to a Prehistoric Planet" (1966), and "Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women" (1966) all offer primeval planets teeming with dinosaurs and other extremely unfriendly samplings of mezeozoic life.

Certainly one of the most interesting alien worlds visited during the mid-fifties was *Metaluna*, a war-torn sphere protected from aggression by nuclear force fields. In "This Island Earth" (1955), unsuspecting Earth minds are recruited to aid the *Metalunians* against super-powered oppressors. The valiant planet, however, finally succumbs to the relentless attacks of *Zhagon*, a neighboring world with conquest designs. Backed by excellent model work and the distinct advantages of Technicolor, "This Island Earth" is one of the most visually attractive interstellar travelogues ever conceived.

Also rather picturesque is the avant-garde world depicted in "Barbarella" (1968). Described accurately by Denis Gifford as "arty" planets, these kinky landscapes project a thoroughly

unreal effect, in keeping with the film's "Alice in Wonderland" fantasy approach. (See complete article on "Barbarella" elsewhere in this issue.)

Warranting a brief word or two is the alien desert from "Robinson Crusoe on Mars," the studio-manufactured moon from Harryhausen's color remake of "First Men in the Moon" (with marvelously animated selenites), the radioactive planet of "Dr. Who and the Daleks," and the curious, creation-by-mere-thought terrain from "Journey to the 7th Planet."

But outdoing all of these in terms of Kafkaesque glee is Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's "Journey to the Far Side of the Sun" (1972). The discovery of a new planet directly on the sun's opposite side leads to a manned expedition commanded by astronaut Roy Thinnes. He makes it to the new world, but finds it an exact duplicate of Earth, only in reverse, like some bizarre mirror-image. Confusing but nevertheless enthralling, the film takes the alien world theme full circle,

suggesting that the planet next door may be your own.

Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey" is perhaps the ultimate "alien film." With exquisitely crafted miniatures and polarized negative filters. It is a visual delight. It is also an intriguing mystery story, stimulating the viewer's imagination by enveloping the concept of alien existence. By not clarifying its conclusions, the film moves out of the usual science fiction orbit into a dream-like reverie. If there are more advanced powers in the galaxy, Kubrick seems to say, our contemplation of them can only be a wondrous sensory experience. As a race, we are not mentally or spiritually developed enough to comprehend beings of such magnificence on a clear, logical scientific basis. So much intellectual advancement separates our race from theirs that they can only appear to us as divine awe-inspiring enigmas.

Walter Pidgeon conducts a tour of Altair-4's vast powerhouse in "Forbidden Planet," 1956.



Jeff Morrow also fights off the mutant. In the film, he didn't.

COMPLETE
STORY-IN-PICTURES
OF
"THIS ISLAND EARTH"



Rex Reason is attacked by the mutant in a publicity still. In the film no such encounter took place.





1 Rex Reeson, as *Cal Meecham*, a nuclear scientist, mysteriously receives plans to build a complicated electronic device. His lab assistant looks on.

3 *Cal* and *Ruth Adams*, another scientist, played by Faith Domergue, discover they are being held prisoner at the scientific meeting.



2 Two strange scientists arrive and ask *Cal* to join their project—preventing war on Earth. Despite their strangeness, he accepts.

4 *Cal* and *Ruth* manage to fly away from the meeting. Their plane is taken aboard a flying saucer.





5 Aboard the saucer, *Cal* and *Ruth* realize they are leaving the Earth's atmosphere, heading into deep space.

7 Metaluna is at war with Zhegon, a neighboring planet, and losing. *Cal* and *Ruth* have been brought to help Metaluna. As they approach the planet, they see the raging space battles.



6 *Exeter*, played by Jeff Morrow, explains his mission to *Cal* and *Ruth*. He is recruiting earth's scientists and taking them to his home—Metaluna, a dying planet.

8 Before they can stand the gravitational pull of Metaluna, *Cal* and *Ruth* must go through the space ship's conversion tubes.





9 The space ship and the abducted scientists fly over Metaluna's wartorn landscape.

10 The Metalunan cities have gone underground since the war began.





11 Cal, Ruth and Exeter observe the horrors of a planet torn by space wars.

12 The Monitor, played by Douglas Spencer, orders Cal and Ruth taken to the mind-transference center. Their minds will work put to work, but they will become zombies.



13 The Metaluna people have created a race of my mutants to do their work.



14 Cal, Ruth and Exeter encounter one of the mutants, a guard at the mind-transference center.



15 Exeter tells Cal and Ruth that he will help them escape from Metaluna.

16 The three break out of the center and head for the space ship.





- 17** The space ship takes off. There is an attack from Metaluna, but they fend it off.



- 18** Unknown to the scientists, a mutant is aboard the space ship.

- 19** Cal, Ruth and Exeter step into the conversion tubes. The extreme gravity threatens to kill the mutant.



- 20** Ruth's tube opens and the mutant attacks her. Not having gone through conversion, the mutant succumbs to space sickness and disintegrates.

- 21** Back on Earth, Cal and Ruth leave the ship by plane. The saucer, with Exeter aboard, crashes into the sea.



Chapter Eight: TV Invasion

TV programs such as "Captain Video," "Tom Corbett: Space Cadet," "Flash Gordon" (with Steve Holland inheriting Buster Crabbs' old role) and others were primarily designed to awe the small fry. Stereotyped heroics and official sounding teams and organizations were given a substantial lift with the incredible "futuristic" innovations of space ships, ray guns and other standard details.

The most successful of these early ventures into the universe of imagination is probably "Superman" (1952), based on the popular comic-strip character. While most of the "space"-oriented kiddie-fests are marginally interesting as nostalgia, "Superman" is a fairly impressive example of early sci-fi TV produced with a reasonable degree of intelligence and taste. Although later episodes are of interest only as "camp", many of the initial stories are treated quite seriously.

Superman, of course, is himself an alien being, the sole survivor of a futuristic planet utterly destroyed by volcanic quakes. When knowledge of this world's inevitable doom reaches a progressive young *Kryptonian* scientist, he fashions a rocketship to carry himself and his family to a curious green planet on the other side of the galaxy, a place called Earth. The catastrophe strikes suddenly, however, and only his infant son is able to make the incredible journey across space. The child lands safely on the new planet and is adopted by a childless couple who raise him to manhood. Only then does he learn what little his foster parents know of his amazing origin. He decides to use his unearthly abilities for the betterment of his adopted world.

"Superman" plots, however,

are firmly rooted in comic books, and are more concerned with establishing an adventure-orientated framework spotlighting the heroic activities of the protagonist rather than dwelling on the inherent science fictional aspects involved in his origin of powers.

The first attempt to develop serious science fiction for television appeared in Rod Serling's popular fantasy series, "The Twilight Zone." As in an O. Henry short story, Serling used the unexpected "trick ending" as a regular ingredient on "The Twilight Zone." Sci-fi authors such as Richard Matheson and Charles Beaumont joined Serling in experimenting with some outer-space based concepts and introduced television to its first real taste of genuine science fiction.

Those episodes of "The Twilight Zone" dealing with outer space aliens follow in the form of a checklist.

1. "Third from the Sun"—On the eve of nuclear war, two scientists and their families steal a spaceship and head for a distant planet. We ultimately discover that these people are aliens, and the world they are headed for, third from the sun, is Earth.

2. "Elegy"—Earthmen land on a world whose inhabitants are frozen in weird positions. The planet is actually a celestial graveyard where the dead find their eternal rest in a surrounding to their liking. Writer: Charles Beaumont.

George Reeves played "Superman" in the 1952 half-hour television series.



3. "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street"—A small community panics when they learn alien invaders have landed just outside of town. They begin to suspect each other in a clever plan by the aliens to turn mankind against itself using fear, mistrust and prejudice as weapons.

4. "People are Alike all Over"—A guilt-ridden astronaut lands on a planet, where he is received warmly by a race of intelligent aliens. Later, he becomes a caged specimen of Earth life.

5. "Eye of the Beholder"—Ugliness is considered beautiful and vice-versa in this strange tale that may or may not be located on another planet.

6. "The Invaders"—Agnès Moorehead plays a tormented woman, unable to speak, who fights off a particularly gruesome invasion of miniature spacemen. After she demolishes their starship, we discover that the invaders are actually Earthlings. Writer: Richard Matheson.

7. "Mr. Dingle, the Strong"—In this comedy-fantasy, bug-eyed, double-headed aliens give Earthly bungler super physical and mental powers.

8. "Will the real Martian Please Stand Up?"—A mysterious extra passenger on a bus tour is an invading alien. All are trapped at a diner during a raging snowstorm. The creature, a Martian, finally reveals himself as a three-armed specimen, and is understandably surprised to discover that the soda jerk is also un-earthly, a Venusian, with three eyes!

9. "To Serve Man"—The world is in awe as apparently peaceful aliens land on Earth. A code expert from the United Nations ultimately discovers that a text given to him by the visitors, titled "To Serve Man," is actually a cookbook. The aliens are cannibals.

10. "The Fugitive"—An eccentric alien on the lam poses as a lovable old man. He befriends and cures a crippled child, then returns to his rightful world. Writer: Charles Beaumont.

11. "The Gift"—Misunderstood alien with friendly intentions receives hostile treatment in a Mexican village. The villagers ultimately destroy his great gift:



a cure for all forms of cancer.

12. "The Little People"—Two American astronauts land on a desolate planet, one of them, power-mad, becomes master of a micro-civilization. Two gigantic aliens happen to land on the same world and accidentally kill the crazed astronaut.

13. "Hocus-Pocus and Frisby"—An impulsive liar is kidnapped by aliens who accept everything told to them as absolute truth. The fellow finally escapes their spacecraft by defeating his abductors with a harmonica.

14. "Probe 7—Over and Out"—A space-age traveler crash-lands his rocket ship on a strange planet and encounters a girl from a different universe. The world is Earth; their names are Adam and Eve.

15. "Black Leather Jackets"—Motorcycle gang is actually the advance guard of an invasion from outer space which threatens our water supply.

16. "Stopover in a Quiet Town"—A couple awakes to find themselves in a weirdly deserted town. Then a huge hand suddenly appears out of the sky and grabs them, the hand belonging to a giant space child whose father brought back the two human "pets" from Earth.

17. "The Fear"—A state trooper and a frightened young woman are threatened by a terrifying, gigantic alien creature. The monster is finally exposed as a huge balloon, developed by miniature aliens to frighten Earth beings into submission.

"Krypton is doomed!" says *Jar-E*, father of "Supermen." From the 1952 TV series.

18. "Death Ship"—Futuristic astronauts land on a bizarre world where they discover an exact duplicate of their spaceship, with their own dead bodies aboard. Writer: Richard Matheson.

19. "The Parallel"—An astronaut lands on a parallel world or planet, finds people, places and things almost an exact duplicate of his own world.

20. "On Thursday, We Leave for Homa"—Party of space explorers are marooned on a dase-

George Reeves, as "Superman," makes an exit the hard way.



late planet, where their leader holds together their faltering morale for several years. When a rescue ship finally arrives, the leader, unable to cope with the idea of no longer being the leader of his group, elects to remain behind.

As these synopses suggest, "The Twilight Zone" employed simple formula of story-telling, building plot and character motivation upon one central idea or emotion. Primal human

Agnes Moorehead starred as a woman whose home is attacked by two tiny-but-terrifying creatures from another planet in "The Invaders," an episode of TV's "The Twilight Zone."



instincts and responses such as greed, fear, loneliness, etc., provided the necessary dramatic basis for series plotlines. After a while, the ironic twists becoming predictable and less satisfying. Potentially imaginative concepts were weakened by the irritating necessity to include the "trick ending." An exception to this rule, however, was "To Serve Man," adapted by Serling from Damon Knight's popular short story. This tale is so painstakingly detailed and carefully developed that the final surprise is totally appropriate.

Make-up artist Bill Tuttle's masterful alien creation, the *Canamit*, is among the most intriguing portrayals of extraterrestrial life ever produced by a film studio. Eight-feet tall, with an enlarged cranium and deep, sunken eyes, the creature's most remarkable detail, an idea carried over from the original story, is his telepathic means of communicating with Earth people. From deep within the huge hulking body and whiskered, motionless lips of the *Canamit* booms a polished, sophisticated voice offering our world peace and prosperity. It is a fascinating depiction of alien life.

With a production base at MGM studios, Serling had at his disposal the props, backdrops and uniforms left over from that studio's sci-fi spectacular of the mid-fifties, "Forbidden Planet." Use of these special materials elevated budget tensions and saved the program thousands of dollars for the construction of new equipment.

During the final years of "The Twilight Zone's" reign, producer Leslie Stevens developed his own far-out anthology series and hired "Psycho" scripter Joseph Stefano to manage things editorially. The program was titled "The Outer Limits."

Stefano enlisted the aid of cinematographer Conrad Hall to give the series a distinctive visual personality. Extensive use of wide and upward angles, darkly lit interiors and vaseline-smeared lenses transformed "The Outer Limits" into a photographic tour-de-force. In tune with the unique visuals, composer Dominic Frontiere developed several often-

repeated orchestral themes that helped create a nerve-racking tension.

"The Outer Limits" featured a different monster each and every week, and these intergalactic drop-ins were considerably played up in the network's publicity campaigns.

The mid-sixties saw TV invaded anew by aliens. Harking back to the hopelessly juvenile days of video fantasy was "Lost in Space" (1967), which offered the intergalactic escapades of a futuristic family of space explorers.

Quinn Martin's "The Invaders" (1968) took itself more seriously. Roy Thinnes was cast as architect *David Vincent*, the first eye-witness to an alien landing on Earth. He single-handedly wages war against the alien forces and is later joined by a dedicated group of fellow believers. Although the invaders are never shown, one episode treated enthusiastic viewers to some eerie shots of an alien losing a human disguise and reverting to his formless state.

Gene Roddenberry's extremely popular series—"Star Trek"—approached the idea of space travel and alien discovery with a sense of bold adventure and spirited awe, a direct contrast to the nightmare tone of "The Outer Limits." Intelligent scripting make the show one of the most impressive sci-fi efforts in any medium. (A detailed report on this series appears elsewhere in this issue.)

From England came the Gerry and Sylvia Anderson series "Captain Scarlett and the Lysters." Originally aimed at the kiddie market, it found a surprisingly large following among adults. A three-dimensional puppet show with marvelous special effects and some curiously sophisticated directional touches, the series proved infinitely more popular than the Anderson's eventual life-action equivalent, an adventure program called "U.F.O."

Today, the Andersons are planning the most ambitious and expensive series of this type ever attempted. "Space: 1999," starring American actors Martin Landau and Barbara Bain, boasts

elaborate special effects and production values to rival the finest theatrical sci-fi efforts. The premise, while somewhat far-fetched, is at least different. Our moon suddenly breaks out of Earth's orbit and charges into deep space, carrying with it a futuristic space station and its understandably bewildered personnel. The action each week takes place upon whatever planet the huge celestial rock happens to pass over. Aliens are strictly of the "Star Trek" school—clearly human in appearance. So far, the series seems to have a plot preference toward stories of immortality, and the temptations and dangers therein. But in keeping with the spellbinding special effects employed generously in each episode, the producers have

worked in several intergalactic wars and some impressive miniatures. While some of these effects shots are suspiciously like "2001," I've yet to hear any science fiction buff complain.

In our study of aliens, we have seen how different creators with personal ideas and approaches have shaped our attitudes towards space and its inhabitants. Often depicted as threatening forces, largely due to man's natural fear of all he cannot comprehend, recently aliens have acquired a new image. A great humanity may well await when we finally meet the peoples of different worlds.

"People Are Alike All Over," discovered Roddy MacDowell, the first earthing on Mars in an episode of "The Twilight Zone." Susan Oliver played *Teena*, a lovely Merian.



Monsters from "The Outer Limits"



The premier episode of ABC-TV's "The Outer Limits" introduced a radioactive galaxy being to startle viewing audiences of the early sixties. Brought to Earth accidentally by radio engineer Cliff Robertson, the terrifying creature warned the peoples of Earth to beware the mysterious forces of the universe, thus establishing the basic theme and central premise of the series.



"The Chameleon." Louis Mace, the army's secret weapon, agrees to have his molecular structure altered so he appears to be an alien from outer space. With his new appearance, he can infiltrate a group of merlooned space visitors to determine whether or not their intentions on our world are honorable.



"Second Chance." A terrifying creature from a distant galaxy transforms an amusement park space ride into the real thing, and abducts several customers in an effort to save his dying world.

"Nightmare." Aliens from the planet Ebon invade our world and hold several Earth astronauts prisoner. The entire affair is finally revealed as a bizzare test instigated by the U.S. Defense Department to study the endurance of Earth soldiers under alien pressures.

"Don't Open Till Doomsday." In the 1920's, an eccentric professor delivers a mysterious box as a present at a wedding reception. The box is actually a spaceship containing a weird creature from another solar system who can absorb human beings into his environment at will.





"The Zanti Misfits." The rulers of Zanti, incapable of destroying their own societal misfits, send them into exile — on planet Earth.

"O.B.I.T." A senatorial investigation reveals the existence of O.B.I.T., an insidious device that watches over human beings anywhere on Earth. The machine was invented by beings from outer space to destroy mankind by using our own fears and prejudices against us.



"The Mice." An alien exchange program delivers us a Chromita, a huge, gelatinous monster from a distant planet. We soon discover that the citizens of Chromo have deceived us, and their ultimate plan is the subjugation of Earthlings.



"The Bellerio Shield." A brilliant scientist, using an advanced laser device, captures a strange space creature which protects itself with an invulnerable shield.

"The Invisibles." Parasitic creatures from distant worlds conquer the minds and bodies of Earthlings in an attempt to destroy our planet.





The Monsters of "Star Trek"

Aliens were not monsters on "Star Trek" —
they look alien because of the accident
of being born halfway across the galaxy.

"Star Trek" was (and still is) unique in a number of departments. It was the first adult science-fiction TV series with a continuing cast; it presented essentially human dramas while remaining true to a scientific basis; it achieved a thoroughly integrated vision of a civilization 200 years from now; it assumed an optimistic view of human potentials...

But probably the best way to set "Star Trek" apart from other science-fiction—whether books,

movies, or TV—is to examine the show's way of dealing with monsters.

What qualifies for monsterhood? "The Boston Strangler" was monstrous, but not a monster; *Dr. Hyde* was a monster. Lions and tigers and bears are not monsters; *Godzilla* and *King Kong* are. A monster is a projection, an imaginary exaggeration of a known danger, that takes physical, conscious (sometimes intelligent) form. "Real" monsters exist only in

fiction—and mostly in science-fiction or fantasy.

From the sci-fi writer's point of view, a monster is a literary device, something that creates conflict, suspense and terror—an obstacle to pit heroes against. In theory, the more terrifying the monster, the more heroic the character who defeats it.

But usually, a monster is not a complex foe. Most monster flicks—e.g. — "Godzilla," "Mothra," "The Thing," "War of the Worlds," "King Kong"—are

essentially the same, dramatically, as disaster movies. The monster is handled as people would handle an earthquake, a burning skyscraper, or an exploding dirigible.

This is not true of "Star Trek" monster stories.

In the very first episode, "The Man Trap," *Dr. McCoy* rediscovers his given-up-for-dead fiancée—then learns she's really an alien making him hallucinate, who must kill by draining human bodies of salt in order to survive. But the payoff came not when the thing was electrocuted on high-tension wires or doused with acid or A-bombed to smithereens, but when *McCoy* learned that he should have used his head rather than his heart and destroyed the image of his love which he knew to be a fraud. The monster, once faced honestly, was easy to vanquish. Self-delusion was more of a monster than the salt-sucking alien.

The Gorn, Kirk's adversary in a battle-of-wits struggle to the death—in "Arena."



Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner—*Mr. Spock* and *Captain Kirk* of *Star Trek*.

In another early episode, "Where No Man Has Gone Before," the monster was an imaginary exaggeration of a very common human fear: fear of the man who knows vastly more than others. *Gary Mitchell* gained superhuman mental powers and sought to rule the universe. *Kirk*, heretofore *Gary's* best friend, watched the powers develop, watched *Gary's* character change . . . and still did nothing to stop *Gary* before he became almost literally a god. Ignoring *Spock's* advice to kill *Gary*, *Kirk* reasoned: yes, *Gary* knows and can do more than any man alive, and he could be dangerous; but if we can trust him, just think how much we might learn!

In "Metamorphosis," a glowing cloud abducts the shuttlecraft and carries *Kirk*, *Spock*, *McCoy* and an ailing ambassador to a planet where they can never be found, and maroons them there. This all-powerful cloud of intelligent energy, a monster according to most definitions, has kept a man alive on a barren planet for a





As she's dying, her powers of illusion are gone and McCoy's beautiful fiancée shows her true nature. From "The Men Trap."

hundred years and has fallen in love with him. The cloud has imprisoned our heroes so they can keep her man from dying of loneliness. Kirk finds he can reason with the cloud—because she loves. And a strong appeal for acceptance of any kind of unconventional love relationship becomes the theme.

The miners, in "Devil in the Dark," are being brutally murdered by a silicone creature who can pass through solid rock as easily as we move through the air. Through the use of the famous Vulcan mind-meld, Spock learns that the creature is protecting a brood of eggs from thoughtless men who, unknowingly, are destroying them. The climax is that moment of understanding; the resolution is a trade agreement with the creature and her race of highly efficient tunnel-makers.

One of the most conventional "Star Trek" monsters was the Gorn, in "Arena." The lizard-like hideous humanoid was Kirk's adversary in a battle of wits to save the Federation. But the unusual situation had Kirk and the Gorn equally matched. Kirk was faster; the Gorn was stronger; and their mental resources were equivalent. (The conventional appearance of the Gorn might merely have been a matter of economics. In the original Fredric Brown story, the Gorn was a red sphere with retractable tentacles and no visible means of sensing or locomotion. That sphere, to be convincing, would have cost a small fortune to construct!)

Another at-first-glance conventional monster was the Mugato of "A Private Little War." But it was just a white gorilla with poisonous fangs—a nuisance more than a calamity. And it had nothing to do with the main point of the story. (Well, even "Star Trek" got too loose in



Captain Kirk, Dr. McCoy, and Lieutenant Uhura (William Shatner, DeForest Kelley, and Nichelle Nichols) deal with an emergency aboard the Enterprise.




*Gene Roddenberry, creator and philosophical guide of *Star Trek* and of its unusual position on the nature of monsters.*

its story development occasionally. The *Mugato* is reminiscent of the mutant in "This Island Earth," as far as its connection to the story is concerned.)

A great many of "Star Trek's" monsters were microscopic: viruses, spores, mutant and deadly disease germs. These kept McCoy's research computers busy and gave us stories of biological science-fiction.

"Star Trek's" most inventive monster was the space amoeba in "The Immunity Syndrome." It was a breathtakingly beautiful one-celled behemoth which the Enterprise and the shuttlecraft entered—as much out of intellectual curiosity as anything else.



Spock grimaces at the pain of first contact with the alien mind of the silicone *Horta*—in "Devil in the Dark."

Then there were the mechanical monsters—androids (*Ruk* in "What Are Little Girls Made Of?" for example), "The Doomsday Machine," "The Changeling," and other minor mechanisms.

There were monsters of pure mental energy—the globes containing essences of three superior intellects, in "Return to Tomorrow;" the *Providers* of "The Gamemasters of Triskellion"; the swirl of hostile energy in "The Lights of Zetar."

There were the ghostly monsters, like *Gorgan* in "And the Children Shall Lead," and the puppet-master-like slugs of "Operation Annihilate."

But these imaginative flights of fancy never took over the show. The monsters were there

merely to focus the action around some very human problem or attribute.

Gene Roddenberry, creator of "Star Trek," has said that the show offered him an opportunity to express his own philosophy of life in story terms. Then what must be his attitude toward the "monsters" of life?

Judging from his "Star Trek" creatures, he must consider it true that there are monsters that we can face in daily life, but they are usually not very big, generally not as powerful as they seem, and no match for human intelligence.

But Roddenberry is also telling us that more often than not the thing we fear is not a monster at all, but merely some force we do not yet understand. When under-

standing comes, there is no longer any cause for fear.

Monsters, to Roddenberry, are not one-man wars to be obliterated; nor are they insects to be squashed. They are products of nature that can be studied, deciphered, and outwitted.

The real dangers on "Star Trek" come not from monsters but from men. Roddenberry believes in villains and heroes (realistic, fallible, human heroes), and he believes that a man can choose which he wishes to be—and even that he can have the ability to change if he decides he's made the wrong choice.

We're told, for instance, that *Vulcans* and *Romulans* have a common ancestry. It's choice and philosophy that makes heroes of

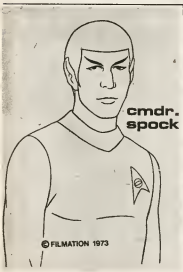
the most *Vulcan Vulcans* and villains of the most *Romulan Romulans*.

(Aliens, incidentally, are not monsters on "Star Trek," as long as they behave just as humans can and they look alien only because of the accident of being born halfway across the galaxy. "Star Trek" was always adamantly anti-prejudice.)

Roddenberry was plagued, toward the end of "Star Trek" filming, by the network's clamoring for more and fiercer monsters. He fought, as he did on other issues, to retain "Star Trek's" unique attitude toward monsters.

He's still fighting. In a recent interview he told of his hattle for *Genesis II*, a proposed series that was shown as a pilot (two pilots, in fact; the other was called *Planet Earth*) and then never seen again. He said that the network was awed by the success of the

Spock, as he appears in the NBC animated version of "Star Trek."



Leonard Nimoy in "Amok Time," an episode from "Star Trek."

...most of the Apes movies. "The public wants apes!" they assumed; and they asked Roddenberry to add apes to *Gene*. He wouldn't. And the apes did not sell.

If you've watched a goodly number of episodes (and who hasn't?) you have probably deduced another of Roddenberry's philosophical tenets: reasonable patriotism. He believes in America's best qualities and believes they will prevail. He's a student of American

History. Oddly, this might also have influenced his attitude toward monsters and aliens. (Remember the American Indian culture of "The Paradise Syndrome"?)

In "The Making of Star Trek" (a Ballantine book by Roddenberry and Stephen Whitfield), Roddenberry says: "We hope we are helping to form the concept that ... future interplanetary space travel is not 'wild fiction.' It will be as important to mankind tomorrow as the discovery of America was in its day. ... Later, the colonists developed new vitality and new ideas which helped change mankind's whole direction. I only hope we'll be wiser when we meet the 'Aztecs'

or 'Mayans' of another planet. In the infinite possibilities 'out there,' if we act like savages, we may find someone quite capable of treating us as savages."

How were the "Star Trek" monsters invented? They were derived from the philosophy guiding the thems and premises of the stories. And that philosophy is largely the personal expression of Gene Roddenberry.

What is a "Star Trek" monster? An unknown phenomenon of nature to be grasped by probing intelligent scientists.

Where are the real monsters of "Star Trek?"

In the mind.

—DAVID HOUSTON

The deadly but manageable
Mugato of "A Private Little War."





The bridge of the Starship Enterprise: "Red alert . . . red alert . . . there is an intruder aboard . . . extremely dangerous . . . phasers set to kill . . ."



Gene Roddenberry, affectionately dubbed "The Great Bird of the Galaxy" by many fans, is the only producer-writer in TV history to have a fan club of his own, The Gene Roddenberry Appreciation Society. He's seen here at his home in Los Angeles—on a mountaintop overlooking the city and the sea.

Beginning a New Series:
Those Famous Fantasy Femmes

"BARBARELLA" **- A SPACE** **FANTASY**

With gadgets, gimmicks,
special effects,
and a healthy
amount of sex appeal,
she was a spacewoman
to delight any
astronaut!



Jane Fonda played *Barbarella*, with John Phillip Law as *Pygar*, the sightless angel who watches over the sexy spacewoman.

Jane Fonda, actress and activist (although not necessarily in that order), was thirty in 1968, when she played *Barbarella*, yet her kittenish expression and lithe, slender body conveyed a youthful sexuality perfectly suited to Jean Claude Forest's delicious heroine. A pseudo-parody of those cliff-hanging damsel-in-distress melodramas of the thirties and forties, Roger Vadim's "*Barbarella*" infused low-core sexual promiscuity, colorful campyness and a dash of wide-eyed wonder into an ornate Technicolored landscape of meticulous cinematic design. Right in the middle of it all, of course, was a pre-liberated Miss Fonda, outshining the most stimulating special effect of her then-hubby's fabricated fantasia.

The character of *Barbarella* (as envisioned by director Vadim and screenwriter Terry Southern) was a thoroughly captivating blend of youthful, almost hoydenish innocence and arousing, extremely entrancing sexuality. Actually, this female answer to *Flash Gordon* is almost square in her bubbly acceptance of rules and order. Occasionally she's even a right-wingish, saluting patriot—(an aspect of her performance that may cause Ms. Fonda some embarrassment today!) In keeping with this childlike personality, *Barbarella* is completely amoral. Never exposed to a society which condemned sexual behavior as evil, locked away in her lonely spaceship with pure thoughts and a clear head, beautiful *Barbie* brings joy to all (including herself) by making intelligent use of her pleasurable natural resources whenever the situation calls for them. The result: these sexcapades are thoroughly in character with



Barbarella rescues her angel, by threatening to blast the *Queen* with her ray gun.





Roger Vadim, Jane Fonda's husband at the time, directs his wife in the scene where

Barbarella is greeted by the two seemingly innocent space-children.



Barbarella's lovable girl scout personality, and suggest, if subliminally, a welcome loosening up of rigid moral suppressions in the swinging world of tomorrow.

Terry Southern's serial-inspired scenario places *Barbarella* in one perilous predicament after another, ably testing her stamina, courage and physical charms. He begins the tale, however, on a decidedly serene note as our wonderful

heroine blythly strips off her cumbersome space garb to reveal her anatomically perfect self, swimming mindlessly in the celestial weightlessness of her dream-like spaceship. An urgent message from the *President of Earth* annoyingly interrupts this reverie, and before long our lovable doll is stalwartly setting a course for a forbidden planetary system in search of a reputedly mad scientist and his diabolical

death ray.

Her first encounter with an alien life form occurs when she crash-lands on a desolate, ice-encrusted planet. Venturing out boldly onto the slippery coldness, *Barbarella*, purpose and mission clearly in mind, peers out into the white wasteland in search of life signs. Suddenly two ornately-dressed little girls present themselves. Bubbling with enthusiasm, *Barbie* begins fidgeting with her "tongue box" bracelet to translate their chirping language into English, but while doing so fails to notice one of the little brats compressing a diamond-hard snowball in her wicked little hands. As lovely a target as any, *Barbarella* registers an understandably surprised expression just before her unconscious body plummets to the icy-cold surface below, the victim of the strategically pitched snowball! The kids, amused at this senseless and extremely vulnerable stranger in their midst, bind her into one neat package and transport *Barbarella* to their mysterious dwelling place, a wrecked spacecraft from another galaxy.

When *Barbie's* eyes blearily open at last, she finds herself standing upright, tied neatly to a pillar and facing a veritable crowd of grinning, sickeningly delighted children. Unable to move, the helpless girl is completely at the "tender" mercies of these malevolent mini-demons, who soon grow bored with their new "toy" and decide to dispose of her in a most unpleasant and intriguing fashion. Several sumptuously beautiful, gaily colored child-sized dolls are placed before the motionless *Barbarella*. Thinking the objects are presents, our heroine proceeds

Fonda as *Barbarella*, with one of the dolls that attacks her.



to thank the silent, smiling tykes for their generosity. But the devilish dolls open their mouths to reveal steel, dagger-sharp teeth!

Barbarella, of course, escapes the monsters' menu, and encounters some highly unusual personalities on her way to the city of Sogo, a cosmopolitan-type community that thrives on the very essence of evil. Her devoted companion, a sightless angel named *Pygar*, is about to have his wings clipped by the local authorities when our girl swings into action to save his feathery hide. Pretending to have succumbed to the *Matmos*, a liquid energy force that brings out the nastiest characteristics in people, *Barbarella's* normally wide, expressive eyes adopt a malevolent squint, and her innocent smile is transformed into a sarcastic leer, devoid of all friendliness and compassion and beaming with unrestrained evil. Supervising this astonishing development is the *Black Queen*, a lovely but lethal leaderess who is openly delighted with the Earth girl's sudden transformation. To conquer the powers of goodness physically is indeed a triumph for any respectable bad guy; but to corrupt and contaminate a pure mind and soul with the blasphemous taint of evil represents the epitome of villainy refined to a black science.

The *Queen* laughs with callous glee as she muses over the fate of the now-wicked *Barbarella*, a mindless slave to the whims of wrongness. It is a grim scene indeed as the bewitched Earth girl toys cruelly with imprisoned former friend *Pygar*, who has been heartlessly presented to the



Barbarella's costume looks a little the worse for wear after her space travels, but the lady inside is still a treat for the eyes.



The gadgets in "Barbarella" were highly imaginative, rather than based on actual scientific space equipment.

citizens of Sogo in a form of mock crucifixion. But alas, it takes more than some nasty hot spring with hypnotic powers to corrupt this space nymph's vibes! *Barbarella* silently sneaks a strategically concealed ray gun from under *Pygar's* lower regions and then savagely locks her arm about the *Black Queen's* neck, threatening to destroy her beautiful wickedness unless the angel is immediately decrucified. Surprised,

shocked and extremely co-operative, the *Black Queen* nervously submits to this one demand for the greater good of her imperiled appearance. But Evil, foul force that it is, ultimately triumphs over its dwindling and outnumbered opposite. It is the overjoyed *Queen* who relishes the last laugh when *Barbarella's* depleted power-buckle is finally observed, revealing the space girl's raygun threat as a clever but nonetheless unsuccessful ploy. Two of the *Queen's* grinning guards fasten their cold, steel fingers around the struggling Earth girl's slender white arms, rendering her completely powerless before the elated *Black Queen*. Once again, *Barbarella* has become the beautiful human target for the evil whims of a wicked world she certainly never made.





Vadim directs Fonda in "Barbarella." The French comic upon which the film was based, was inspired by Brigitte Bardot, one of Vadim's earlier wives.

But of all the perils our space-age *Pauline* must endure in the name of exciting plot development, the most original is a torture infinitely more sophisticated and ultimately more enjoyable than her usual humiliations. After with-

standing whips, falling rocks, flesh-ripping birds and countless buffetings of one sort or another, *Barbarella* is smugly placed into the "excessive machine," an oversexed mechanical organ (in both the musical and physical senses of the word) which is guaranteed to murder the recipient with sheer, untempered, unrestrained pleasure. As things work out, however, the dastradly device backfires in its curious function; standard clobberings and evil-based assaults can successfully razzle our delicious heroine, but attempting to overwhelm *Barbarella* with that beautifully positive power known as sex is roughly like trying to put out a raging fire by smothering it with matches. Restoring our faith in the power of goodness and clearly establishing sex as something very, very nice, *Barbarella* undoes the excessive machine by burning out all its fuses, and emerges from the played-out instrument a healthier, happier specimen of womanhood and a credit to every male chauvanist of the future.

Although French comic-strip artist Jean Claude Forest originally patterned the *Barbarella* character after Brigitte Bardot (one of Roger Vadim's earlier discoveries and wives), Jane Fonda, Vadim's wife at the time, with her long, sensual




fingers and warmly evocative smile fitted out the physical specifications of the role perfectly, and also added to it the natural charm of her vibrant personality and an important professionalism seldom seen in such light, undemanding parts.

In "Barbarella," a light fantasy, a promiscuous farce, she displays a marvelous flair for comedy and brings to the character a natural wit and presence generally lacking in the comic strip version. When the newly-liberated Ms. Fonda turned down the lead in a planned sequel, the plans stopped right there. It's easy to see why. "Barbarella" was Jane Fonda—and not even the well-rounded Brigitte Bardot could have filled her space suit.

•

There was something distinctly right-wing about the saluting *Barbarella*—a characteristic that may now embarrass the liberal Ms. Fonda.





Atwill created a screen image as the precise, even debonair gentleman, who was perfect in all ways but one—he was just a bit mad!

Lionel Atwill — Maddest of the Mad Scientists!

"You think I'm mad, don't you? Mad? Of course I'm mad!" Or how about: "Think of it, my dear! I offer you eternal life!" Remember? You bet we do!

Setting: A wax museum, where a horrified Fay Wray claws at the face of the mad curator, who coats living bodies with melted wax. The fetching damsel-in-distress watches in horror as the madman's face, itself a mask of wax, cracks and peels to reveal the scarred features of the monster beneath!

Scene changes to a hidden laboratory in a gothic castle. A battle between *Frankenstein's* monster and the town's wooden-armed chief of police. Focus on the chief of police's face as the monster rips off the wooden arm, only to fall into a pit of hoiling, huddling goo.

The star of these scenes, from "The Mystery of the Wax Museum" (1933), and "Son of Frankenstein" (1938) is one of horror's real greats, Lionel Atwill. Known to many as the mad scientist of dozens of films, Atwill brought poise and dignity, along with a superior acting ability carried over from a distinguished stage career, to his many horror roles.

Atwill was born in Croydon, England and was educated at the Mercers School in London, where he studied architecture. Apparently young Lionel's interest in that field was short-lived, however, and in 1904 he made his debut on the London stage. He became something of a success as an actor in Britain, especially in the plays by Ibsen, Shaw, and Pinero. Between 1910 and 1912 he toured Australia with a British acting company. Glad to return to his mother country, Atwill had to be coaxed in 1915 to travel once again by actress Lily Langtry. Their destination: America.

Ironically, despite his reluctance to come here, Atwill found almost immediate success on the Broadway stage in the role of *Dick Maraden* in "Mrs. Thompson" opposite Miss Langtry. He recreated many of his Ibsen roles opposite such well-known actresses as Helen Hayes, Katherine Cornell, and



A portrait of the stage-trained actor shortly after arriving in Hollywood to pursue his screen career. He was one of the few theatre actors who preferred movies.

Nazimova. Atwill is remembered as having done some of his best work in the plays "Hedda Gabler," "The Little Minister," "The Walls of Jericho," and "The Silent Witness." In this last, Atwill gave a memorable performance as a British gentleman accepting the accusation of murder to protect the real murderer, his son. When the play was bought for the movies, he was asked to recreate the role and so, in 1932 Lionel Atwill began his film career.

Contending that the stage was more adequately equipped to train actors for the screen, than the screen for the stage, Atwill embarked upon his film career with supreme self-confidence. It was this very confidence, in conjunction with his eloquence and style, which made him so perfect in the up-to-eight films a year (most of them horror films) he made in the period 1932-46. After "The Silent Witness," audiences got their first taste of Atwill in a laboratory as *Dr. Xavier* in Warner Brothers' "Dr. X." Two films later, he secured his place in films with "The Mystery of the Wax Museum."

As the curator, left penniless, crippled, deranged, and as Fay Wray finds out, horribly scarred by the fire which his partner sets in his wax museum, Atwill sets out murdering people, then setting

their bodies in wax. The finale, in which he is unmasked by Fay Wray, was so masterfully arranged, that it took even the actors by surprise. Said Miss Wray later in an interview, "I was in his clutches and I had to hit him in the face. It was necessary for the audience to see this and he shocked. But when I struck him, and the moment I saw part of him, I just froze! I wanted to run; I just couldn't go on! So they had to make another mask and do it over when I recovered."

Thought for years to have lost to the decay of time, horror huffs found to their delight a copy of this masterpiece in the private collection of Jack Warner. A copy

Atwill as "The Mad Doctor of Market Street," the first of seven films in which he appeared during 1942. In all, Atwill appeared in 59 features.





Atwill was unforgettable as Inspector Kragh, the Chief of Police with the stiff wooden arm in "Son of Frankenstein." Here he recreates Kragh in "House of Dracula."

was made for screening at the New York Film Festival of 1970.

Besides his roles in horror films, Atwill's background made him an excellent character actor, and over the years he had supporting roles in such major films as "Nana," "The Devil is a Woman," "Captain Blood," "Lives of a Bengal Lancer," and "Three Comrades." His skill with the role of the dignified but sinister foreigner landed him

parts in three Charlie Chan films, "Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise," "Charlie Chan in Panama," and "Charlie Chan in Honolulu."

It was, however, in the horror film that Atwill gained his fame. Starting with the famous *Dr. Frankenstein*, mad scientists played a major role part in the increasingly popular horror films of the 30's and 40's, and no other star of the time portrayed that role with such diabolical believability as Lionel Atwill.

Many felt Atwill's stage experience was a key factor in his movie success. He was one of the first top stage actors lured to the film, a previously unrespectable



Boris Karloff, as *Frankenstein's Monster* rips off the arm of Inspector Kragh—a moment of classic movie horror in "Son of Frankenstein," 1939.

medium. He never, however, looked down upon the films, even his parts in films such as "Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation." Said Atwill in 1932: "I'm one of those few stage actors who really like the film, and admit it." He saw the future of films as a medium which would provide adult entertainment in combination with adventure and sophistication.

"Murders in the Zoo" was Atwill's next film after "Wax Museum." He played a zoologist who murdered his wife's lovers in succeeding sinister fashion. Horror films such as "Mark of the Vampire" and "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head" followed interspersed with a few straight films such as "Firebird," "The Great Waltz," and "The Three Musketeers."

In 1939 Atwill gained immortality in the minds of horror film buffs, as the chief of police in "Son of Frankenstein." His marvellous portrayal was mimicked this year by Kenneth Mars in Mel

Brooks' "Young Frankenstein." The finale where Atwill, equipped with a new wooden arm to replace the one torn out by the monster, salutes the forgiven *Dr. Frankenstein*, is one of that film's most satisfying moments.

Atwill played the infamous Professor Moriarty opposite Basil

Atwill also appeared in "The Ghost of Frankenstein," 1942. Glenn Strange played the monster, with Bela Lugosi as Ygor, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke as Dr. Frankenstein. Atwill, in white coat, played the doctor's assistant.



Rathbone's *Sherlock Holmes* in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" in 1939, and again in 1943 in "Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon," following in the footsteps of horror stalwart George Zucco, and actor Henry Daniell. In this latter thriller, Atwill traps the famous detective in his dockside laboratory, with the intention of draining his blood, drop by drop, but Scotland Yard saves the day.

His next horror role was as the mad *Dr. Rigan* in "Man Made

Monster," a vehicle for Lon Chaney Jr. Chaney played *Dynamo Dan*, the *Electrical Man*, the sole survivor of a bus crash into an electric pylon. As *Rigan*, Atwill theorizes that dosages of electricity will preserve life, and by studying *Dan*, plans to create a race of super-powerful slaves.

The picture of Atwill, the mad scientist, rolling his fierce eyeballs, bristling his proper, clipped moustache with fury, uttering lines such as, "You think I'm mad don't you? Mad? Of course I'm mad!", or "Think of it, my dear! I offer you eternal life!" in his precise British accent, became a familiar one to masses of film-going horror buffs of the 40's. In horror, a British accent was a great asset. Atwill was only one member of horrordom's English colony, which included Colin Clive, Leslie Banks, Claude Rains, Basil Rathbone, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, George Zucco, and the godfather of horror himself, Boris Karloff.

In "The Mad Doctor of Market Street," Atwill tries to gain control over the world, only to be shipwrecked on a south Sea Island, where the natives worship him as "The God of Life." In "The Strange Case of Dr. Rx," he plays the evil *Dr. Fish*. "Night Monster" sees him in a supporting role with failing horror great, Bela Lugosi.

Atwill's personal life also took

Atwill's Inspector Kragh met the monster for a re-match in "House of Dracula," 1945. Glenn Strange played the monster.





With Sidney Toler in "Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise," 1940.

With Lon Chaney Jr. in "Man Made Monster," 1941.

some dramatic routes. Proud of his connection with the macabre, one of his hobbies was attending murder trials. He was married four times, once to the former Louise Cromwell Stotesbury, the former wife of General Douglas MacArthur. They were married in Maryland in 1933. His oldest son, John Anthony, was killed while serving in the RAF in England in 1941.

Perhaps the most startling event in his life, considering his respectable image, was his arrest in 1940 for showing pornographic films and allowing alleged orgies to take place in his home. The jury found insufficient evidence for action, but the next year Atwill was indicted for perjury. Pleading guilty, he claimed to have "lied like a gentleman to protect his friends." Atwill was fortunate not to have suffered the full coverage by the media, which could have ruined him. Hollywood turned a forgiving face, and Atwill was given subsequent roles after the scandal.

"Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man" pitted Lon Chaney Jr.'s





Atwill, left, faces a staircase full of suspense in "Night Monster," 1942. Above Atwill, stands Bela Lugosi.

Another still from "Night Monster," 1942.

famous carnivore against Bela Lugosi's portrayal of the monster—now known by the name of his creator. Atwill leant the weight of his name to the proceedings, as he did in "Ghost of Frankenstein," where he played the evil assistant to mad scientist Ludwig Frankenstein. Other B-pictures in the last years of Atwill's career were "House of Frankenstein," (once again as the Inspector), "House of Dracula," and "Fog Island."

In the last years of his life, Atwill was featured in serials—one a western, "Raiders of Ghost City," the other a Tarzan rip-off, "Lost City of the Jungle."

Lionell Atwill died at the age of 61 in 1946 in his home in the Pacific Palisades, of pneumonia. Six months earlier, his wife had given birth to a son, Lionel Anthony Atwill.

Although Atwill's star in the horror firmament may be dim, those of us who stay up late for the old movies, and attend the festivals, remember his name with respect. A fine actor of consistent quality, Atwill never let us down, not even when he appeared in short-timetable, low-budget B-rate horror pictures. Salute to Lionel Atwill—the maddest of the mad scientists.

—DAVID SMITH



**A Monster Fantasy
Masterpiece**

"The Phantom of the Opera"

Credits!

Synopsis!

Little-known facts!

**The complete story
behind
Lon Chaney's horror
classic!**

"The Phantom of the Opera," A Universal Classic. Director: Robert Julian. Main Cast: Lon Chaney (*Erik, The Phantom*), Mary Philbin (*Christine*), Norman Kerry (*Reouf*), Snitz Edwards, Gibson Gowland, John Sainpola, Virginia Pearson. Author: Edmund Carve. Released: September 6, 1925. Running Time: 79m.



Lon Chaney as "The Phantom of the Opera," his 1925 horror masterpiece.



The Phantom appears at the masked ball dressed as Edger Allen Poe's character The Mask of the Red Death.



SYNOPSIS

The *Phantom* is a keen but mad musician, who hides his hideous malformed face behind a mask. He lives in the catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House, hiding away from the public. He loves the opera and has his own private box, which is permanently reserved.

Christine, a young beautiful singer in the chorus, has been advised and coached by a mysterious voice from the walls. The *Phantom*!

The *Phantom* falls in love with *Christine* and believes she is the best singer in the opera, but the management doesn't agree and against the *Phantom's* warning casts a better-known singer in a part the *Phantom* had wanted for *Christine*.

The *Phantom*, angry at this, shouts out, "She sings to bring down the chandelier!" and drops the opera house's huge crystal chandelier on the unexpected audience. During the panic the *Phantom* kidnaps *Christine* and takes her deep down the catacombs, to her awaited Bridal Suite.

Christine is so curious about the face behind the mask, that she rips it off the unexpected *Phantom* while he is playing his own composition, "Don Juan Triumphant." The face is that of a living skull, and *Christine* recoils in terror. The *Phantom* lets her return to the world above, if she promises to say nothing of what had happened.

During the annual grand masked ball, *Christine* tells of her experience to her lover, *Raoul*, not realizing that the *Phantom*, in his costume of Edger Allen Poe's "Red Death," overhears.

Shortly after *Christine* disappears, *Raoul* and *Ledoux*, an agent for the French police, set out to find her in the catacombs.

They fall when the *Phantom* traps them in a dungeon and leaves their fates to *Christine*. She has the choice to either become the *Phantom's* bride and set free *Raoul* or set off explosives that will destroy herself, the *Phantom*, *Raoul* and the entire opera house. She decides it best to save the lives of everyone and marry the *Phantom*.

But in the meantime, *Raoul* and *Ledoux's* dungeon is being flooded. *Christine* sees this and begs for mercy. The *Phantom* shows his pity by letting *Raoul* and *Ledoux* escape to safety.

Parisian mobs now storm the catacombs in search of the *Phantom*. But the *Phantom* flees by walking underwater, breathing through a straw, thus unnoticed by the mob.

Once above the ground, the *Phantom* rides off in a carriage. The crowd follows in wild pursuit.

The *Phantom* is cornered by the Seine River, and the mob begins to close in on him. He stops them by threatening them with a hand-grenade. While howling, the mob realizes he is unarmed. They overrun him, knocking him into the Seine, where he drowns.



Mary Philbin recoils in horror from Chaney, as *The Phantom*. Now considered a screen classic, the picture could easily have failed, and in early screenings was not a success.

THE FILM FACTS

The year 1925 was considered a bad year for the movie industry. The problem was the rise of radio. (Similarly, television was blamed for a movie slump in the late 40's and early 50's.) Nevertheless, 1925 had some really great film releases. Among these was the screen adaption of Gaston Leroux's 1908 mystery romance, "The Phantom of the Opera."

The president of Universal Studios, Carl Laemmle Sr., spent approximately one million dollars on this production—an enormous amount at that time.

The set was an exact replica of the Paris Opera House. The five tiers of boxes and balconies were the first ever built on a structural steel framework. Other stages were used for the *Phantom's* hideout rooms, the cellars and the subterranean lake. Miniature models or matte shots were not used in the interior photography of the movie.

Shooting of the film started late in 1924. Ten weeks later, the film twice was previewed. Laemmle didn't like the results, and brought in Edward Sedwick, an action-comedy director, to lengthen the climax of the mob overrunning the *Phantom's* hideout. It was also at this time that the wild carriage ride with the *Phantom* was added, in addition to the foot chase past the Cathedral of Notre Dame, (still standing from Chaney's earlier "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," (Universal, 1923), and the *Phantom's*

drowning in the Seine. Laemmle again didn't like the results and ordered additional shooting and re-editing.

In this new version a sub-plot was added, in which Ward Crane fell in love with *Christine*. Many more scenes were added which were directed by Sedwick. Rubert Julian, the original director, wasn't involved in this additional shooting.

The new version was not well received when it opened in San Francisco on April 26, 1925. Laemmle dropped all the additional footage,

with the exception of the chase, and decided to turn the film into a comical mystery romance, and got Chester Conklin to add some humor—which he did. The result was worse than ever. The film no longer made sense, so the comedy footage was dropped and new editors were called in.

The film was additionally complicated by director Julian's arguments with Chaney over the characterization of the *Phantom*. Nevertheless finally the picture was completed.

The official premier took place on September 6, 1925. The footage count was 9200 feet, with running time a little over two hours.

The black-and-white photography was done by Charles Van Enger. He used shadows throughout to create an eerie gothic mood. (He also served as a go-between for Chaney and Julian, during their blow-ups.)

Two-color Technicolor was used in the Sequences showing Gounod's opera "Faust." Considerable color footage was shot, but in the final print it was edited down to only small

The Phantom plays for his captive audience of one. Made just before the age of sound, an orchestral score accompanied the picture. Later, sound was dubbed in some sequences.





Lon Chaney, the first of the screen Phantoms.

portions of Act I thru V, plus some bellet excerpts.

The most important color scene was the masked ball, where the *Phantom* attends dressed as Edgar Allan Poe's character "Red Death." He was clothed in a long flowing crimson cloak with a skull mask, much like his own face.

One important scene is generally believed to have been in color, but actually wasn't. This is the scene that comes right after the ball, in which the *Phantom*, still in costume and seated on top of the huge statue of Apollo atop the opera house and sees Kerry and Philbin below. The reason this scene is remembered in color is that the original released prints had the *Phantom's* blowing cape tinted.

Chaney's disguise as the *Phantom* was perfect. He moved through his

scenes with a swiftness which gave the character an element of bizarre terror. Christopher Lee's similar interpretation of *Dracula*, in the Hammer series may have been inspired by Chaney's *Phantom*. The only clues that it was Chaney behind the disfigured face was the unmistakable and characteristic use of his hands. He exaggerated many of his gestures and postures to create an eerie and pitiful man.

Before the release of the film, no advanced photos of the *Phantom* were distributed. The studio wanted the audience to get the full impact of the *Phantom's* horrifying face during the unmasking. When, quite late in the film, it was finally revealed, the effect was so horrifying that "women screamed" and "strong men fainted." The revelation was devised of a series of shots. With careful placement of character and camera angles, Julian doubles the shock. First, *Christine* stands behind the *Phantom* as he plays his organ. She can't see his face. When she tears off his mask, the audience is first shocked by the disfigured features. Then the *Phantom* turns around so *Christine* sees him. Thus through her shock, the audience is shocked a second time.

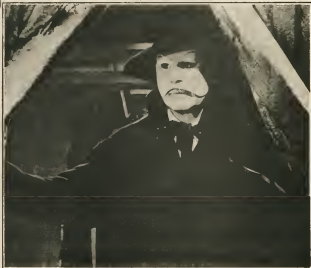
This unmasking technique was duplicated a few years later when Fay Wray (of "King Kong fame) exposes the disfigured face of Lionel Atwill

in "Mystery of the Wax Museum," 1933.

In his 1906 novel Gaston Leroux describes the *Phantom* as follows: "His eyes are so deep that you just see two big black holes, as in a dead man's skull. His skin, which stretched across his bones like a drumhead, is not white, but a nasty yellow. His nose is so little worth talking about that you don't see it side face, and the absence of that nose is a horrible thing to look at. All the hair he has is three long dark locks on his forehead and behind his ears."

Chaney used this description to help him create his own hideous *Phantom*, but was reluctant to discuss how his makeup was actually constructed. Film buffs agree that his head was elongated with a matted wig at top, and taped back ears. His face was a gloomy white, with black around the eyes. To emphasize the eyeballs, the upper portion of the lower lid was highlighted. The cheeks were darkened, to accent the gauntness of his face, the nostrils were expanded, perhaps with hooks fastened by thin wire to his wig. Specially made celluloid disks were inserted in his mouth, to disfigure his cheekbones, and little clamps were inserted in the corners of his mouth

Claude Rains played the *Phantom* in a 1943 revival. Some of the sets from Chaney's version were used.





In 1962, Herbert Lom played the Phantom in the Hammer version.

to pull his lips down. The false jagged protruding teeth were molded of gutta percha. Lastly, to complete the skeleton appearance, Chaney wore a tightly-fitted dark suit. Thus was born the Phantom!

When the film was shipped to Great Britain, the Universal publicity man had the cans containing the reels met at the landing dock and escorted into the country by a contingent of soldiers. This piece of publicity backfired. The alarmed government confiscated the reels and banned their being shown.

In 1930, Universal shot some dialogue scenes with some of the stars—like Philbin and Kerry. Sound was added to some of the operatic sequences and some color scenes were re-shot. Lesser scenes were deleted, the singing voice of Philbin was badly dubbed, and sound effects and music were added throughout. The Phantom's voice was heard a few times, but this was not Chaney, who wasn't involved in this semi-sound version.

"Talking, Singing, Dancing, Sound Effects, Music, Color!" the ads stressed, but only about a third of the film contained dialogue sequences—and the new version was not successful.

In 1943, Universal did a complete remake of "The Phantom," with Claude Rains—remember him in "The Invisible Man," Universal 1933? Universal shot the new production in full color, and used the original sets, slightly altered.

The British Hammer did a remake of the remake in 1962, with Herbert Lom in the title role. It was not up to either of the earlier versions. In the climax, for example, the Phantom rips off his own mask and jumps on stage from his balcony seat, only to be killed by the falling chandelier.

On December 11, 1940, Lon Chaney Jr. (who in his own film career played all the classic film on-stars, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein's monster*, the *Mummy* and of course, the *Wolf Man*.) attended a ceremony on the great Paris opera set. Five survivors of the original cast and crew, unveiled a plaque, which read:

"Dedicated to the memory of Lon Chaney, for whose picture 'The Phantom of the Opera' this stage was erected in 1924."

—MAX MILLER

William Finley played the Phantom in a rock version, 1975's *Phantom of the Paradise*.



ALFRED HITCHCOCK

—*Master of Movie Chills*



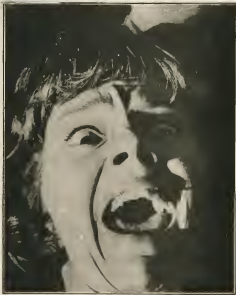
Alfred Hitchcock, the master of spine-tingling suspense, shown between scenes of his 1972 hit, "Frenzy." Hitchcock brings forth screams not only from his actors—but from audiences as well!

A raven attacks one of the school children in "The Birds," Hitchcock's 1963 film.

When the names of the world's greatest directors are tallied up, Alfred Hitchcock's is always right up there with the best of them. Those of us who have long been devotees of Hitchcock aren't surprised at the respect he's engendered all over the globe. Still, when you consider Alfred Hitchcock, there is one unique thing about him: he's the only director who has achieved universal popularity and fame while working in the medium of suspense and horror. And, even more amazing is the fact that he didn't even start out to be a film director at all!

Alfred Hitchcock was born in London on August 13, 1899, to

Vera Miles shrieks in this publicity still from the classic "Psycho," 1960. In the film, Vera's screams were usually drowned out by the audience's genuine cries of terror. Remember her going into the root cellar? Eeeekkkk!



Berbera Leigh-Hunt lets out a howl in "Frenzy," as she realizes she's at the mercy of the necktie strangler.



Hitchcock's films not only scare and delight the viewer, they often make him as guilty as the villain!

Emma and William Hitchcock. His father was a poultry dealer and fruit importer, but young Alfred never showed signs of following in his dad's footsteps. Right from the start, he was a curious child, with an interest in the unusual. By the time he was eight, little Alfred had ridden every bus line in London. He was fascinated by geography and maps, and would buy a copy of the shipping bulletin each day to plot the location of the British merchant fleet on his wall map at home.

By 1912, (he was 13) he was at-

Hitchcock's sense of humor is as well known as his sense of horror. Here he takes time out from directing "Rebecca," 1940, to lift a prop weight. His own weight at that time was 239 pounds.

tending St. Ignatius College (a Jesuit institution) and University of London. His interests seemed to be firmly planted in the technical aspects of the world. He studied to be an electrical engineer, and also showed an interest in his courses in art, navigation, economics and political science. Nothing out of the ordinary appears in his life at this time, and when he left the university, his first job was in his chosen field of engineering—he made technical calculations on electrical systems that the company he worked for installed.

But it wasn't long before young Hitchcock's interest in engineering waned. He soon dumped technology in favor of his interest in art. He got a job as the assistant layout man in a London department store's advertising office. The pay was very small, but it was a beginning.

That start led to Hitchcock entering the motion picture business in 1920 when he had just turned 21. An executive of Famous Players Lasky (now Paramount) came to London to film *Sorrows of Satan*. When young Hitchcock, arriving to show his portfolio, learned that a different film had suddenly been substituted in the studio's plans, he worked all night to assemble another portfolio, this one for *The Great Day*. He got the job—as the title writer and artist. In this, his first professional movie job, he already showed flair and ingenuity by adding little symbolic drawings to the titles.

By 1923 Hitchcock was working as a scenario writer for Gainsborough Pictures in England. At that studio, he served more or less of an apprenticeship in the film business—learning the jobs of assistant director, art director and production manager as well as scenarist. He got his first screen credit that year as art director of *Woman to Woman*, and just two years later he directed his first film, *The Pleasure Garden*.

From 1925 on, Alfred Hitch-

cock was to go on to bigger and better things, beginning with his marriage in 1926 to his adored wife Alma, who had toiled as assistant director on *The Pleasure Garden*. (She continues to do continuity for his scripts and sometimes writes them, too.)

Hitchcock's name conjures up a host of suspenseful masterpieces. *Rear Window* with James Stewart and Grace Kelly; *Strangers on a Train* with Robert Walker and Farley Granger; *Blackmail*, which was the first British sound film; *Dial M for Murder*; *Vertigo*; *North by Northwest*; *The Trouble with Harry*; *The Lady Vanishes*; *The 39 Steps*; *To Catch a Thief*; *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and, of course, two of the greatest horror movies of all time: *Psycho*

Hitchcock's sense of humor is also demonstrated by his cameo guest appearances in each of his films. Here, in "Psycho," he leads two dogs out of a pet shop as Tippi Hedren walks in.



and *The Birds*. Now at work in the pre-production phases of yet another film, the working title of which is *The Rainbow Current*, Alfred Hitchcock has rarely slowed his pace. His last film, in 1973, was the masterful chiller, *Frenzy*.

Terror and Hitchcock surely go hand in hand. There are hundreds of *Psycho* fans who still won't take a shower as a result of Janet Leigh's horrifying murder scene in the shower of the motel operated by Anthony Perkins.

"People will say, 'It was a terrible film to make. The subject

A dummy corpse of Hitchcock was photographed afloat in the Thames as a publicity stunt for "Frenzy," in which the necktie strangler dumps his victims into London's river.

was horrible, the people were small, there were no characters in it," Hitchcock once mused. "I know all of this, but I also know that the construction of the story and the way in which it was told caused audiences all over the world to react and become emotional."

Some critics have called *Psycho* the most elaborate practical joke ever. In it Hitchcock



Tippi Hedren and Rod Taylor attempt to fight off an invasion of starlings in "The Birds," 1963



managed to poke fun at almost everything we take seriously: cleanliness, wealth, nice cars, dutiful sons, law and order, etc. Few subjects are left unscathed.

It is in *Psycho*, more than any other film, that Hitchcock makes the viewer a party to the crime. His gift for making the viewer in the theater partially "guilty" of the crime is in full force here. It's a technique he recently repeated in *Frenzy*. How does he accomplish making us the "accomplices" in *Psycho*? If you remember the movie, you will probably recall your loyalties switching all through the film. But never once in *Psycho* are the sympathies of the audience decided by usual rules of morality. For example, in the beginning of the film, our sympathies lie with Marion (Janet Leigh), even though she is in the process of stealing another woman's husband, Sam (John Gavin), and a great deal of money. When Marion is stopped by police, we remain on her side, rather than

At the conclusion of "The Birds," a battered Tippi Hedran is helped out of the house by Rod Taylor and Jessica Tandy.

on the side of the law—we don't want the cop to catch her with the cash.


Later on, at the infamous Bates Motel, we watch fascinated while Mom murders Marion in the erotic shower scene. And who hasn't felt touched by Norman Bates' (Tony Perkins) loyalty to his mom while watching him clean up the blood-spattered bathroom? Considering the fact that we're touched by this compassion even while the naked body of Marion is lying in our view, it must be admitted that Hitchcock is fully stringing us along as accomplices. He is mixing our feelings of pleasure and guilt in genuine measures.

The inappropriateness of our sympathies continues throughout the film. The horror of the killings and the shock of the

Mom-Norman relationship is terrifying enough. The realization that we are "rooting" for a madman and murderer throughout the film only increases our terror—because it mixes it with a great dollop of uneasiness about ourselves.

The closest film to *Psycho* on a level of sheer horror has got to be *Frenzy*, and in this film, too, our loyalties are divided and tend to switch. We're appalled by the murders. When it appears—at the very beginning of the film—that Jon Finch might be the murderer all London is looking for, we like him regardless. When we later learn that the killer is instead his friend, played to perfection by Barry Foster, we already like Foster and it is too late for us to find him hideous. Even after we watch his brutal rape-murder of Finch's estranged wife, we don't feel enough hatred for Foster to root against him.

The dualism of good guy-bad guy reaches its peak when Foster



Hitchcock knows how to build terror frame by frame, until his audiences' nerves are stretched as tight as wire. Here, in "Psycho," he subtly establishes the connection between *Norman Bates*, played by Anthony Perkins, and a bird of prey.

Q: "If you were to be murdered, Mr. Hitchcock, what method would you prefer?"

A: "Well, there are many nice ways: Eating is a good one."



kills Anna Massey, the woman who loves Finch and who is helping Finch escape the police (who think he is the real murderer). We want Finch, the "hero" of the film, to be exonerated; we are totally shocked when Foster murders Massey; and yet, when Foster goes on his grisly potato-truck ride to retrieve the diamond stickpin that will give him away and which is clutched in the dead girl's hand, we are rooting for him! Instead of hoping that Foster will be caught so he can be punished for killing Massey, we can't help but hope he will get his pin. We heave a sigh of relief when he safely escapes!

All this is an example of how precisely Hitchcock plays with a loaded deck. Terence Fisher, the famed British horror director from Hammer Studios, once remarked that he thought Hitchcock a very cold director, a director who strung people along for his own purposes, who manipulated the feelings of the audience for his own amusement. This is undeniably true, but it is also, as Fisher admitted, one of the sources of the audience's delight with Hitchcock's horror films.

Of all Hitchcock's films, *The Birds* is the one whose theme bears the most resemblance to classical horror films as opposed to psychological terror. On tele-

vision, with his "Alfred Hitchcock Presents," the master also managed to terrify even the stoutest of heart. It was with his TV shows that Hitchcock perfected his trademark: a mixture of horror and laughter, the truest of black comedies.

Who'll ever forget his wonderful *Lamb to the Slaughter*, where the protagonist (Barbara Bel Geddes) bludgeons her husband to death, then serves the searching police her murder weapon—a leg of mutton?

As far as his own personal preferences go, Hitchcock once stated his own feelings were to be murdered himself. "Well, there are many nice ways: Eating is a good one." After all, how many people would ever dream of discussing, tongue-in-cheek, the prospect of their own violent demise? Only Alfred Hitchcock, the greatest master of gruesome guffaws ever!

—S.M.

In "Frenzy," Jon Finch casually buys an evening paper headlining the necktie murders. Not only will his wife become one of the victims, he himself will be accused of the crime.



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